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CHAUCER'S TROILUS AND CRISEYDE AS A PARADIGM OF LOVE

BY

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The undersigned certify that they have read and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde as a Paradigm of Love submitted by Jonathan A. Peters in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

In my thesis I propose to discuss some conceptions of love that have been advanced about Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde. Chapter I investigates the courtly love theme, with Pandarus as its exponent. In Chapter II the focus is on Criseyde, seen as a woman in society who is forced by people and circumstances to accept the hero, Troilus, as a lover only to reject him later, when they become physically separated. Troilus is the subject of my third chapter, and he is viewed from the pinnacle of a Christian dispensation as a sinner who reaps his just deserts. In the fourth and final chapter I attempt to bring these diverging conceptions of love together with the help, and from the perspective, of the Narrator and artist.

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INTRODUCTION

It may seem presumptuous to attempt to explicate Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde as a poem of love, since the poem is so obviously about love. Indeed, it has received so much attention on this account that in recent times critics have turned to other matters for an insight into its meaning. Such matters include the characterization of the major personages in the story especially in connection with the developments in the modern novel, the pervasive influence of destinal and other supernatural forces, the poet's use of style as an element of rhetoric and an index of meaning and the complex uses of irony and echo throughout the poem. About the importance of these other matters, critics have been in wide and sometimes violent disagreement. But I have not heard of anyone who denied that the poem is about love. Given this general theme, the task of interpreting the poem would seem to be relatively easy. On the contrary, however, we are no nearer to a discovery of the poet's vision when we decide that the Troilus is a love poem. There is still, another, and equally weighty, question to be considered. This question is, what kind of love does the poet celebrate?

The basic assumption of such a question is that we are looking for a type of love and if we turn to the love manuals of Chaucer's day we are not likely to be disappointed. In his famous treatise on love, Andreas Capellanus (in the late twelfth or early thirteenth

century) formalized love, setting down rules and doctrines governing its observance. He defined love thus:

> Love is a certain inborn suffering derived from the sight of and excessive meditation upon the beauty of the opposite sex, which causes each one to wish above all things the embraces of the other and by common desire to carry out all of love's precepts in the other's embrace.[1]

Yet, although Andreas was preoccupied with only one kind of love, namely, courtly (or, as he calls it, "honest") love, he was still able to distinguish between modes of love within this particular system.

The fact is that when we talk about a particular kind of love, we often still have to make distinctions for one reason or another. Love arises from a variety of causes and there may be more than one type involved in a particular case, just as someone suffering from the common cold may have had his attack from one or more of the many viruses that cause this disease. In Chaucer's day, love was commonly thought of as a disease, and, when it was of the kind that Andreas describes in his treatise, it had its suitable cure. The poets of the Middle Ages have always been praised, or blamed, for popularizing a notion of love that was different in essence from anything that had gone before it. It would, however, be a misconception to imagine that the only type of love in evidence during this period of history was courtly love. It was, rather, an age in which diverging conceptions of love -- like articles of Faith -- were blended and "confused" in startling or perplexing or gratifying combinations. Medieval poets took special delight in juxtaposing different or conflicting ideas, and if, in the case of love, they succeeded -- almost

without exception--in rejecting all others for the divine love in which their age believed fervently and longingly, such rejection did not usually include a denial of other loves as temporary, or even necessary, endeavours. Also, between literary and theological notions of love hung the ordinary beliefs of the average "medieval mind," transmuting the doctrines of the strongly influencing literary and theological principles into socially integrated myths to become an unwritten guide to social behaviour.

In the pages that follow I shall try to view love in the Troilus from a number of angles, for I believe that Chaucer saw all these possibilities himself and tried to work them into a composite whole in his greatest poem. I tend to see more than a confrontation of courtly and divine loves in the poem, primarily because such a dialectic does not, to my mind, account for most of what has been called the "psychological realism" displayed in characterization, but, in addition, because I take the poem's meaning to be more complex than that. I do not wish to suggest, however, that my categories are exhaustive even of the loves of the Troilus -- there is the love of Pandarus, for example, that I have dealt with neither in detail nor as a separate consideration in its own right. What I do wish to point out is that we will not be doing justice to Chaucer's aims or total achievement in the poem if we judge the poem from the limited focus of one aspect of love.

Accordingly, I have deliberately structured my investigations in such a way as to consider one perspective of love at a time from

the standpoint of the three most important characters, namely, Pandarus, Criseyde and Troilus. My interpretations are intended to demonstrate both the pitfalls that we are liable to get into from a circumscribed view (as in the consideration of Troilus) and the insight we can get into a particular problem, when so used (as in the characterization of Criseyde). Finally, I attempt a broad look at the poem's total panorama using the Narrator as a starting-point for this.

The code of courtly love is given fair hearing with Pandarus as its exponent. It is improved from Boccaccio in many ways but the poem does not fulfil its doctrine completely and is exploited, first by Pandarus, its interpreter, and later by Diomede. Criseyde represents, in some measure, the woman in society, but is called for special duties as the heroine of romance or of courtly love. She is one or other of these in turns, but never the same throughout. As shown in this thesis, Troilus is a sinner in a Christian society. This does not prevent him from acting -- or over-acting -- the part of the courtly or romantic lover, for he has obligations to the code and to his friend Pandarus, since Criseyde's pity is made so much of. Lastly, from the vantage of Chaucer as speaker and artist we can see the complex relations and levels that bring us as close to the total meaning as we can get.

CHAPTER ONE

Pandarus and the Code

No one ever attempts to deny the Troilus its courtly love element; indeed, many eminent Chaucerians have put forward very convincing arguments to show that Chaucer deepened the poem's grounding in courtly love lore over and above the emphasis laid on it by Boccaccio in the Filostrato. No less a scholar than C. S. Lewis has shown how the poet "medievalizes" the story, entrenching it more firmly within the courtly love tradition. "The majority of his modifications," writes Lewis, "are corrections of errors which Boccaccio had committed against the code of courtly love . . . and these are only part and parcel of a general process of medievalization."[1] Again, in a monograph designed to demonstrate that the Troilus is to a profound degree a courtly love poem, Thomas A. Kirby[2] has examined the background of the code of courtly love and traced its origins back to Ovid and the Ars Amatoria.

A nearer source of the spirit of courtly love is, by a common consensus, the Provence of the eleventh or twelfth century in which there was a sudden outburst of lyrical activity the exact origins of which are still a moot point among critics. It is now generally recognized, however, that the troubadour poets who popularized the love lyric in the Middle Ages derived their inspiration (in part, at least) from medieval society and culture, and that vestiges of this impulse are

still with western man in the very changed social and religious circumstances of our latter-day twentieth century. From apparently small beginnings, this spirit evolved into a highly complex system of the ethics proper to love as conceived under the code, the basic doctrines of which are the irresistibility of love and its chastening and ennobling power.[3] It may not be altogether correct to say that this conception of love was an invention of the high Middle Ages but there is ample justification for the assertion that the Provençal poets gave currency to this medium of lyrical expression. That the code not only permitted but encouraged -- indeed venerated -- adulterous love in an age of such singular religious fervour is only one of the many paradoxes that the modern mind encounters in turning to the literature and mores of Chaucer's day.

Another factor that contributes to the sense of paradox in medieval life is the contrast between the kind of love celebrated by the "courtly" poets and the actual situation as we know it to have been at the time. Thus it is that the "idea that women are nuisances and half-wits established itself most firmly in our cultural pattern during the very years in which there flowered most abundantly the poetry of woman-worship."[4] Along with the deification of Woman came the recognition of love as a good in itself and therefore worthy to be pursued for its own sake. This transformed the code into an ethical formulation with specific rules of conduct and therefore an ordered morality which developed a dangerous rivalry with the Roman Church. The more common traits of the love relation -- usually a triangular

pattern comprising jealous husband, lover and wife/mistress with the lady exalted above the lover in quality and authority -- are familiar enough and there is no necessity for dwelling on them here. Suffice it to say that these "Commandments of Love"[5] which enjoined service and subjugation to his mistress on the part of the aspiring lover were dispersed well enough -- thanks, perhaps, to the treatise of Andreas Capellanus and the poetry of the most notable troubadours, among them the earliest troubadour William of Poitiers and others like Bernhart de Ventadorn, Marcabrun and Arnhaut -- to become eventually conventionalized. The portrait of the love-stricken malheureux anxious to conceal his woe but still wishing to gain favours from the loved one whom he considers to be far above his deserts; the weeping, helpless suitor desirous only to serve his lady and win her "pitee" for his woeful plight; the courageous squire striving to obtain reknown so as to increase his standing with his mistress -- all these, and more besides, become typical of the servants of Love. But perhaps the most revolutionary of all these features is not the kind and texture of the relationship as much as it is the object: the most exalted passions in the literature of antiquity had been celebrated between one man and another.[6] In the writings of the Fathers of the Church and other religious writers, the bond had been that between man and his Creator, a patriarchal worship that was celebrated in concrete and quite often sensual terms.[7]

The inference is, then, that what may be called a new religion was a direct challenge to orthodox religion. Curiously enough, about this same time there sprang up within the Church itself a worship of the

Virgin which, if it preceded the "courtly" system, was a recognizable adversary of the idolized Lady and (what is possibly a more likely occurrence) if it succeeded the courtly love tradition, it was suggestive of the anxiety within the Church about this new heresy and a weapon to use against the heretic religion by providing a parallel within the Church. One important lesson to draw from this is that in the Middle Ages there often tends to be a blurring of the edges as to where paganism or heresy ends and where real religion (in a Christian sense) begins. Even today, a close examination of the evolution of the Christian faith will readily disclose that many of the practices that form the core of the Christian canon came either directly from, or were inspired by, ideas other than biblical doctrine or early Church practice. It should therefore not be surprising to discover that the Church adopted customs of pagan origin, nor -- and this is our main concern -- that the poets of the courtly love tradition took over thoroughgoing Christian concepts and practices in its worship of Woman.

This very brief outline of some of the salient features of _amour courtois_ is designed simply to orientate the consideration of the _Troilus_ as a courtly love poem. But in passing from the tradition to the poem itself emphasis must be laid on the fact that we are here considering adherence to or divergence from the code rather than realism or verisimilitude.

On a narrative level Chaucer's design in the _Troilus_ is completely symmetrical. In the first five lines we learn that the poem is an account of Troilus' "double sorwe"[8]

> In lovynge, how his aventures fellen
> Fro wo to wele, and after out of joie... (I, 4-5)

and a little later the Narrator elaborates, pledging himself to

> .... gon streght to my matere,
> In which ye may the double sorwes here
> Of Troilus in lovynge of Criseyde,
> And how that she forsook hym er she deyde. (I, 54-56)

In being thus explicit about the progress of his "matere" the poet abandons a suspense of surprise for one of expectation: the story is a "thrice told tale." The poem teases our expectation simply because of the fact that as a poem paying tribute to the code of courtly love the circumstances under which the lady, once her love has been given to the lover, can justifiably desert him, are very rare; certainly not for another if the former remains faithful. It is as yet too soon to draw conclusions, however, because we know nothing of the parties concerned as the poet intends to present them, but it certainly stimulates our interest in the Narrator's story.

Before going on with the story proper the Narrator digresses for a short while on the siege of Troy by the Greeks and on the origin of the war. This provides the opportunity for mentioning the treachery of Calchas in forsaking kith and kin and aligning with the Greeks and is a politic way of introducing his daughter, Criseyde, who is the first of the main characters to appear on the scene. It is interesting to note that on this occasion she is the suppliant suing for life itself at the hands of Hector, a situation into which her father's betrayal thrusts her. Though the rôle of suppliant is soon to be reversed, the picture is also important as a prefiguration of her own betrayal

of Troilus. Again, this opening scene is a measure of her defencelessness and her need for support and help, as well as of the pity that Hector readily bestows, as these lines readily bear out:

> For bothe a widewe was she and allone
> Of any frend to whom she dorste hir mone.
> . . . . . .
> Now was this Ector pitous of nature,
> And saugh that she was sorwfully bigon,
> And that she was so fair a creature;
> Of his goodnesse he gladede hire anon,
> And seyde, "Lat youre fadres treson gon
> Forth with meschaunce, and ye youreself in joie
> Dwelleth with us, whil yow good list, in Troie."
> (I, 97-98, 113-119)

After this brief glimpse of the heroine in distress there is a pause for source identification as the Narrator describes the various fortunes of the war. The next scene reveals Criseyde, assured and calm, attending a feast of Pallas as the people of Troy pay homage to the guardian of their safety amid the freshness and flowers of spring. The situation is the ideal one for falling in love in a Chaucerian ethos. Small wonder then, that the arrogant Troilus as yet untouched by the scourge of love falls such a ready prey. The earlier portraiture of Criseyde (I, 101-105) which virtually puts her on a level with divinity may be cited to explain the suddenness and finality of Troilus' falling in love, portrayed in a careful pairing of Anglo-saxon monosyllables; for, as he moves about in the temple taking stock of all present,

> ... upon cas bifel that thorugh a route
> His eye percede, and so depe it wente,
> Til on Criseyde it smot, and ther it stente. (I, 271-273)

Troilus, as it were, falls in love by the book.[9] His first words are an address to a deity (I, 276-277), who is presumably the god of Love, and the poet immediately after interposes another description

of Criseyde. This is intended not to emphasize the divinity of her nature so much as her mature womanliness, for which Chaucer deploys the rhetorical figure of litotes. And he takes care to point out that this was not entirely love of a pretty face at first sight but that

> ... ek the pure wise of hire mevynge
> Shewed wel that men myght in hire gesse
> Honour, estat, and wommanly noblesse. (I, 285-287)

In accordance with the rules, love quickly passes from the lady through the eyes to the heart:

> And of hire look in him ther gan to quyken
> So gret desir and such affeccioun,
> That in his hertes botmen gan to stiken
> Of hir his fixe and depe impressioun. (I, 295-298)

The reactions of the hero to the first pangs of love typify the courtly lover. Initially it is a sense of confusion (I, 301); the suddenness of the blow is as a death-stroke (I, 306-307); instinctively, it seems, "His woo he gan dissimulen and hide" (I, 322); and then he goes to his chamber where he begins first to sigh and groan and think about Criseyde. Finally he begins to "make a mirour of his mynde" (I, 365 ff.) and makes a firm resolve:

> Thus took he purpos loves craft to suwe,
> And thoughte he wolde werken pryvely,
> First to hiden his desir in muwe
> From every wight yborn, al outrely,
> But he myghte ought recovered be therby;
> Remembryng hym that love to wide yblowe
> Yelt bittre fruyt, though swete seed be sowe. (I, 379-385)

The course that Troilus goes through is one that concludes, in feudal style, with thraldom within love's domain. In the first Canticus Troili -- ostensibly from Lollius but in fact an adaptation of a

Petrarchan sonnet -- the hero pays his respects provisionally to the god of Love, to be formally ratified in the presence of Pandarus on a later occasion. The diction of his address is fraught with oxymorons characterizing the paradoxical nature of love from within, as Troilus blows hot and cold and savours his "quike deth," his "swete harm so queynte" (I, 411). One cannot help noticing, besides, the effect on his outward acts as the Narrator draws special attention to the refining of Troilus' actions, his prowess in the lists occasioned by a desire to win fame for himself and favour from his beloved.

Book I may be called the book of Chance. By extension, it is the realization by Calchas that Chance or Fortune is not on the side of the Trojans that causes him to take refuge with the Greeks. Troilus falls in love by chance, and the varying fortunes of the war which parallel Troilus' own fortunes in love are also set forth. Pandarus -- here an uncle to Criseyde instead of the youthful cousin, Pandaro, in Boccaccio -- fortuitously comes upon the hero helplessly and hopelessly pining in love. Troilus asks "'What cas . . . or what aventure'" guided his friend to find him "languisshinge" and declares that his malady has no remedy so that he must needs die (I, 568-573). Pandarus' entry marks the turning point in the narrative for he enters to take control of the situation. Left to himself, Chaucer's Troilus would not have had the courage to face Criseyde and he would almost certainly have languished to death. Because Troilus is here portrayed as a novice in the art of love, Chaucer enhances the rôle of Pandarus

over that of his Italian counterpart, Pandaro, and makes him an exponent of courtly love lore. Hereafter, nothing seems to happen by chance; everything seems instead to be under the management of Pandarus (including elements of nature) as Prospero-like he exerts his practical magic on the pair he finally brings together.

Books II and III see this new influence fully at work, but it has its beginnings in the first book. There the stage manager busies himself first of all with the hero and puts him in the right frame of mind for the wooing of Criseyde. In his intensely (almost brutally) matter-of-fact way he reminds his friend that

> "Thow mayst allone here wepe and crye and knele, --
> But love a womman that she woot it nought,
> And she wol quyte it that thow shalt nat fele;
> Unknowe, unkist, and lost, that is unsought." (I, 806-809)

The office of the go-between is one strongly recommended by the doctrine of courtly love, partly as a means of ensuring secrecy.[10] In proposing himself as spokesman for the distracted Troilus, Pandarus however issues a word of caution, pointing out that the lady's virtue, inasmuch as it had pity as one of its ingredients, was by that very token guarded against unreasonable demands[11]:

> And also thynk, and therwith glade the,
> That sith thy lady vertuous is al,
> So foloweth it that there is some pitee
> Amonges alle thise other in general;
> And forthi se that thow, in special,
> Requere naught that is ayeyns hyre name;
> For vertu streccheth naught hymself to shame. (I, 897-903)

Troilus, of course, affirms that his intentions are only "that that myghte sownen into goode" (I, 1030-36) and the book ends with the platitudinous account of the chastening power of love as it refines his

conduct both in arms and in personal demeanour (I, 1072-1085).

It is in the courting of Criseyde leading up to her yielding and the final consummation in Book III that Chaucer departs most from his original. Characteristically, therefore, Book II, "the book of Criseyde," begins with an Invocation to Clio, the Muse of History, the poet promising "Myn auctour shal I folwen, if I konne" (II, 49). The scene opens on a beautiful May morning (apparently a few days or weeks after Troilus' enamourment) and we are reminded that Pandarus is himself a courtly love adherent, for in spite of "al his wise speche" he "Felt ek his part of loves shotes keene" though he "koude . . . so wel of lovyng preche" (II, 57-59). In thus bringing in Pandarus' own dedication to the service of Love, Chaucer equips the confidant for his more extensive performance in the drama of the lovers' alliance in the Troilus: his function is not that of a dry theorist; he plays the part of an active savant who knows both theory and practice even if the latter was not of the pleasant kind.

His competence is well illustrated in the way he launches Troilus' love-suit. It has been remarked that part of Criseyde's misfortune at this time is that her uncle knows her so well. His strategy is very complex. First he puts her on the defensive by bidding her set aside her mourning (II, 111-112); next he arouses her curiosity and perplexity (II, 120-121) and then leaves her in suspense (II, 134-135); he pretends to change the subject only to bring in subtly the subject of Troilus' valour and good deportment (II, 190-207); soon afterwards, he abruptly rises to leave (II, 208-209) and when Criseyde

objects, he brings back the invitation to "daunce"

> "And cast youre widewes habit to mischaunce!
> What list yow thus youreself to disfigure,
> Sith yow is tid thus fair an aventure?" (II, 221-224)

Criseyde is understandably non-plussed by this "fremde manere speche" (II, 248) and asks him to come out into the open. But Pandarus's sense of the dramatic is not yet exhausted. He coughs in the manner of someone about to make a very important declaration and then denies the very method of circumlocution he is using to get to the question of Troilus' love:

> "And sithen th'ende is every tales strengthe,
> And this matere is so bihovely,
> What sholde I peynte or drawen it on lengthe
> To yow, that ben my frend so faythfully?"

In spite of this declaration, he pauses to think about what the best alternative would be, gazes intently on the by now panic-stricken Criseyde, and digresses about the blamelessness of Fortune when individuals fail to take advantage of their opportunities (II, 267-308). The petrified lady is forced to implore him to say what it is all about once for all and relieve her of her fear (II, 309-314). The story proper needs only five lines although the crafty emissary amplifies it with a quantity of tears for effect. According to the manner in which he marshals his arguments, Criseyde's refusal would entail harm not only on Troilus but on himself as well. It is all a deliberate attempt to condition her refusal in advance, in view of her earlier admission that she owed so much to him and had paid back so little (II, 241-242). The interlocutor paints a brief picture of Troilus' suffering ending in death just because a cruel fair refuses a simple, generous request.

Next he throws in a proverb and then reverts to rhetoric, using the figure of anaphora which Chaucer reserved for very special and very important occasions:

> "Wo worth the faire gemme vertulees!
> Wo worth that herbe also that dooth no boote!
> Wo worth that beaute that is routheles!
> Wo worth that wight that tret ech undir foote!
> And ye, that ben of beaute crop and roote,
> If therwithal in yow ther be no routhe,
> Than is it harm ye lyven, by my trouthe! (II, 344-350)

Pandarus now dilutes the request by declaring that the relationship sought is not one that would bind her to Troilus in any way but that the point of his petition was "bettre chiere . . . and moore feste" (II, 360-361), simply in order to save the life of Troilus. This done, he avers that the proposal is reasonable, then posits and rejects a possible objection; furthermore he declares that this sort of liaison is common practice in the town (II, 379), coaxes Criseyde to accept and concludes by returning to his leitmotiv, the avoidance of Troilus' death.

It is a startling proposal but very apt, as it turns out. Eventually Pandarus extracts from Criseyde a consent to befriend Troilus on the strength of the prima facie case he has presented -- that is, to avoid the death of the aspiring lover -- and Pandarus scuttles away so as not to lose all by trying to do too much on the first sally (II, 582-596).

Let us pass over the heroine's musings about love and the trepidations of the hero about writing a love-letter and go on to the delivery by Pandarus of Troilus' letter. Criseyde, as usual, is on her

guard and refuses outright to accept the letter since this was not "resonable" according to the order of simple friendship to which she had consented:

> "Scrit ne bille, [she says]
> For love of God, that toucheth swich matere,
> Ne brynge me noon; and also, uncle deere,
> To myn estat have more reward, I preye,
> Than to his lust! (II, 1130-1134)

This reaction is not mere aloofness on her part. Criseyde is fully aware -- as well as Pandarus -- that her acknowledgement of the letter tantamounts to a sanction of Troilus' advances and she demurs. But what is here worthy of note is the way Pandarus literally forces her receipt of the letter and, by implication, Troilus himself as a suitor. To illustrate this, let us look back on what takes place in the Filostrato. There Criseida is not so vehement in rejecting the missive for she has the letter delivered into her hand and then thrusts it herself into her bosom whilst Pandarus is obliged to thrust the letter into Criseyde's bosom even while she protests, subsequently challenging her to throw it away and face the consequences of its apprehension by someone who is not privy to its exact import.

The difference in approach sketched here is characteristic of the divergences of portrayal of the confidant between Boccaccio and Chaucer and illuminates the strong influence on Criseyde's thoughts and actions that Uncle Pandarus exerts; in addition, it illustrates significant distinctions in the conception of the heroine. Thus in the Filostrato a fully consenting, half-assisting lady is seen raising objections on the grounds of propriety, whilst in the Troilus a half-

objecting, half-consenting beloved is viewed hesitating on account of propriety, honour, fear and sobriety, but yielding gradually under the utmost pressure.

These distinctions in conception go a long way towards explaining Chaucer's departure from the original in the development of the love theme up to its consummation. And in this development we can trace the application of vigorous and still more vigorous propulsion on all fronts directed at either party with a view to getting the couple together made by this most indefatigable patron and friend in his function as the deus ex machina of much of the action in the story. In the first instance, Pandarus uses oral persuasion first to get the hero to agree to declare his love to the lady, and later on uses this same method on Criseyde herself to convince her to make some concessions to Troilus without compromising herself, as we have seen. Henceforward his tactics turn to the use of physical means, deploying specially arranged or contrived situations in an ascending order of complexity; these serve to buttress rather than replace the rhetorical device. The first we have seen of this is the foisting of the letter on his niece. Before this scene ends he has scored another hit, distinguished from the first one because it was planned in advance. Troilus, fulfilling his earlier counsel, is riding past and the scheming Pandarus is already installed at the window where his niece naturally joins him. He has enough time to pay tribute to Troilus' virtues by the time the latter comes riding along. He calls Criseyde's attention to it and then forestalls her instinctive impulse to duck out of sight by point-

ing out that this may be misconstrued by the hero: "O fle naught in (he seeth us, I suppose), / Lest he may thynken that ye hym eschuwe" (II, 1254-1255). This little episode furnishes the necessary confirmation of Pandarus' thesis that a man of such impressive breeding and gentility should not be allowed to die but rather that such a man should be able to win favour from any lady with pity in her heart.

The next scheme that is set in motion is the invention of a law-suit by a certain "false Poliphete" who is contesting the very liberty that Hector bestowed on the heroine in the opening scene of the poem. This new threat to Criseyde's self-sufficiency comes at a time when she has begun to feel secure and confident, re-awakening all the doubts and uncertainties about her existence that she believed she had overcome. But more than this, the clever Pandarus makes Troilus' assistance and that of important relations of his virtually indispensable and the end product is Criseyde's kissing of the love-sick Troilus for whose inner malady she alone knows the cure and who is the only remedy for her own physical disease.

The final scene that culminates in consummation is indisputably the most intricately contrived. This is how the Narrator describes the confidant's preparation for a meeting at his house "som nyght" to discuss the "heigh matere / Touchyng here love":

> ... he with gret deliberacioun
> Hadde every thyng that herto myght availle
> Forncast and put in execucion,
> And neither left for cost ne for travaile.
> Com if hem list, hem sholde no thyng faille;
> And for to ben in ought aspied there,
> That, wiste he wel, an impossible were. (III, 514-516, 519-525)

Included in the preparation is weather prognostication to find out when "that the wolken shop hym for to reyne" (III, 549) and an alibi for Troilus' absence. Criseyde is obliged to spend the night at her uncle's and Pandarus puts her alone in a room that has a secret trap-door entrance. Even with all these complex provisions, Pandarus is forced to tell some deliberate lies before Troilus can be admitted. Ironically, he imagines a case of jealousy on Troilus' part occasioned by suspicion that Criseyde has another lover (again an instance of a foreshadowing of things to come) and demands immediate redress instead of the postponement that she suggests. Even when Troilus finally comes in -- not with the heroine's consent for she is too perplexed to think -- Pandarus continues to play an active part. He runs for a cushion, tears off Troilus' shirt and literally shoves him into bed with Criseyde. At last, however, he himself recognizes that he is de trop and exits with the candle.

Chaucer deliberately delays the fulfilment of physical love between Troilus and Criseyde, thus redeeming the story from the partly cynical, partly pretentious preoccupations of Troilo and Criseida in the Italian poem. By so doing, he entrenches it more firmly within the cult of courtly love which warns that a too ready yielding to love travesties the quality and imperils the duration of the relationship. Moreover, while the physical satisfaction climaxes this development, the prolongation of the wooing allows the poet to body forth the genuine mutual value of their unconsummated love as it appears to Criseyde:

> It semed hire he wiste what she thoughte
> Withouten word, so that it was no nede
> To bidde hym ought to doon, or ought forbeede;
> For which she thought that love, al come it late,
> Of alle joie hadde opned hire the yate.
> . . . . . .
> For whi she fond hym so discret in al,
> So secret, and of swich obeisaunce,
> That wel she felt he was to hire a wal
> Of stiel, and sheld from every displeasaunce;
> That to ben in his goode governaunce,
> So wis he was, she was namore afered--
> I mene, as fer as oughte ben requered. (III, 465-469, 477-483)

There is no doubt that Chaucer took the love affair of Troilus and Criseyde very seriously. As a token of this the invocation to the third book (which cuts in two the events in Deiphobus' house) is dedicated not only to Venus as the "sexual attraction and the cosmic 'love' which binds together the universe"[12] but also to Calliope the Muse of epic poetry. Love is thus rated an "heighe matere" (III, 516) with enough depth and grandeur for epic treatment; therefore the satiation of the passion of the lovers is "byset in joie and bisynesse / Of all that souneth into gentilesse" (III, 1413-1414). The whole scene is powerfully reminiscent of the holy sacrament for the courtly cult is a kind of love religion and so we witness the consecration of two of its disciples. Yet in all this ecstasy there is some element of pathos celebrated in the aubades of Troilus and Criseyde who regret the approach of dawn and blame the sun-god, Apollo, for their separation.

Unlike Boccaccio, Chaucer leaves this book untrammelled by any definite statements about impending disaster. True, the whole course of the action is committed to such an eventuality; nevertheless, by keeping the development serial and ordered, the English poet is able

to achieve a neater structure. All the same, Chaucer uses the technique of suggestion to stimulate interest in the way the inevitable happens.[13] Pandarus is made to give cautionary advice to Troilus to "Bridle alwey thi speche and thi desir, / For worldly joie halt naught but by a wir" (III, 1635-1636) -- this is a piece of advice that Troilus himself would recall when it is too late; and the poet himself observes that "Fortune a tyme ledde in joie" [my underlining] (III, 1714) the jubilant pair.

The clear-cut divisions of the progress of Troilus' fortunes enables the poet to effect a sudden change at the beginning of Book IV contrasting sharply with the rapture and the sense of stability that are the keynotes of the book of love. In this fourth book it is the avenging Furies that intervene, and Mars the god of War. Fortune withdraws her fair face and the world of the lovers is plunged in darkness. Theirs is no more a world of romance but one of doubt, fear, anxiety, longing, desperation and despair. The atmosphere is no longer "courtly" as the lovers look about them for a solution to mundane affairs which threaten their love and even their very existence. The "courtly" preoccupation consequently flags in the denouement of the action; the important feature becomes the steadfastness of Troilus as opposed to the betrayal by Criseyde who forsakes him and takes up Diomede instead.

Now the code of Courtly Love distinctly frowns on betrayal of true love and Criseyde is doubtless culpable for her treachery. But the wreath of doom that enshrouds the poem seems to remove some of her

guilt. In this connection, the invocation of the Fates at the beginning of Book V is quite suggestive. One cannot help asking whether there was something inherent in the character of their love that promises ultimate collapse. Treating their amatory liaison as a purely courtly love affair one can find a possible way of explaining (away) the breakdown of their union. It is that their attachment begins as mere friendship, is enhanced to amor purus and then altered to amor mixtus. The venerable chaplain of love lore, Andreas, does not exalt or denigrate either love. He makes the nobleman in Book I, Chapter 6, Dialogue viii opt in favour of "pure" love because it is more enduring and stable. "Mixed" love which "in extremo Veneris opere terminatur" (or which climaxes "in ultimo valore" as Boccaccio calls it in the Filostrato) is rejected because it is uncertain, ephemeral and dangerous. In actual fact, an argument of this kind is essentially one of high philosophy since any love that is geared to time is by definition temporary.[14] What leads to complications in the case of Troilus is the fact that he refuses to face up to the loss of Criseyde. This loss he regards as undiluted personal tragedy and his own chaste innocence succeeds only in accentuating her guilt. In the last scenes of the work he is full of self-pity for his plight and moves about under the illusion that people are remarking on his melancholy (V, 617-623). He cannot help laying charges of desertion and cruelty at Criseyde's door, thus including her among the generality of creatures that he had execrated soon after their rupture (V, 206-210):

> Allas! I never wolde han wend, er this,
> That ye, Criseyde, koude han chaunged so;

> Ne, but I hadde a-gilt and don amys,
> So cruel wende I nought youre herte, y-wis,
> To slee me thus! Allas, youre name of trouthe
> Is now fordon, and that is al my routhe.
> . . . . . .
> . . . I se that clene out of youre mynde
> Ye han me cast; and I ne kan nor may,
> For al this world, withinne myn herte fynde
> To unloven yow a quarter of a day!
> In corsed tyme I born was, weilaway,
> That yow, that doon me al this wo endure,
> Yet love I best of any creature! (V, 1682-1687, 1695-1701)

He holds on to his dignity to the bitter end but he loses some of the glory of love's finesse when he plunges himself into battle to seek his death. While the Narrator hedges over his encounters in battle, he cannot altogether dismiss the suggestion of vindictiveness in Troilus' attempt to get even with Diomede.

The books of fate do not therefore pursue the courtly love theme as faithfully as the earlier ones. This is perhaps because Chaucer does not present it as flawless.[15] The episodes leading to the consummation of the love between the hero and the heroine have a heightened sense of beauty and charm but it must be remembered also that this very code had to be exploited to make it possible. Pandarus, as interpreter, plays on the emotions of the heroine, the effect of which will be studied in the next chapter, and, with Troilus' corroboration and collaboration, knowingly deceives and conditions her to accept the love of the hero. (It seems probable that given time Criseyde may well have succumbed to ordinary pressure from Troilus because she genuinely, if reluctantly, requites his love, but Pandarus hastens her submission by his machinations.) The combined

onslaught of the two is replaced by Diomede who seduces her single-handed and this double duping adds its own to the external forces that influence the heroine from beginning to end, dictating her most far-reaching actions and decisions.

Emphasis in the preceding discussion of Pandarus' prominence as an interpreter of the code of courtoisie has been devoted largely to his mediation between his dear friend and devoted niece. However, there is more to the man than that. A factor that must not be neglected in appraising his character is his attitude to the whole business of uniting the hero and heroine. Pandarus simply relishes the rôle of match-maker and brings to bear all his powers and skill to ensure success. There is certainly no doubt that his efforts spring from a genuine desire to see others happy for this makes him happy in his own way. Although he resorts to some unorthodox measures during the courting of Criseyde, it would not be fair to say that he is devoid of any moral sense or scruples. He attests to the fact that he is not free from censure in his intercessions in Troilus' interest, but he protests that his assistance is totally unmotivated, or motivated entirely by his devotion for Troilus.

This fact lends support to a lenient view of his crime in inveigling his niece and protégé into accepting a lover. One might perhaps also remind oneself that he gets the least practical benefit out of it. Scrutinized as an individual in terms of his own private life instead of in his connections with Troilus and Criseyde, something about him emerges that is pathetic. Knowing as much as he

does of the principles and doctrines of love, he should normally be more successful in his own affairs. But the race is not for the swift. Nothing endears him to us to the extent that his contentment with his lot -- even his gay flippancy about lack of progress in love's court is impressive -- stirs our warm admiration. Little about his feelings and emotions proves as touching (or as sick) as when he watches the first embraces of the lovers in the consummation scene "and fond his contenaunce / As for to looke upon an old romaunce" (III, 979-980).

If he appears to have all contingencies under his thumb all the way through from the launching of the campaign to win Criseyde on to its final fulfilment, the greater debt for this control over affairs is owed to his resourcefulness and his practical wisdom. Yet, as later developments prove, there are limitations to his powers. Having persuaded the diffident Troilus to allow him to introduce the subject of his love to Criseyde and having at long last managed to relieve his friend's passionate longing, he is incapable of persuading him to elope with Criseyde -- a course that the intermediary considers is the only one that would assure them of continued happiness.

His scepticism about the likelihood of Criseyde's return to Troy once she has gone over to her father and the Greeks is not unfounded. It is the practicality that is so fundamental a part of his character that frowns on the solution that the lovers agree on in the end. A further shade of this pragmatism is disclosed when Pan-

darus half-seriously recommends that Troilus give up Criseyde:

> "Why listow in this wise,
> Syn thi desir al holly hastow had,
> So that by right it oughte enough suffise?
> But I, that nevere felt in my servyse
> A frendly cheere, a lokyng of an eye,
> Lat me thus wepe and wailen til I deye." (IV, 394-399)

Pandarus gets small thanks for his pains in helping Troilus gain his love and less understanding for his own perennial misfortunes in love as the hero's rejoinder amply shows. But he has the capacity for sharing in the fortunes of others that Troilus lacks. Accordingly, he is struck dumb when Criseyde's guilt is established beyond all doubt and regains his speech to declare

> "... I hate, ywys, Cryseyde;
> And God woot, I wol hate hire evermore! (V, 1732-1733)

Nonetheless this has a trace of the kind of pity that had been part of his theme-song when he helped in the wooing of Criseyde, as he adds,

> "And fro this world, almyghty God I preye
> Delivere hire soon! I kan namore seye." (V, 1742-1743)

In the light of this evidence on Pandarus' character one can hardly be reproached for venturing to like him. This is not to give a blind eye to his vulgarity or his pimping but to place them in perspective. Sanctity is proper to the saint but Pandarus is wholly a citizen of the world in all its bustling, rejoicing, wooing, weeping and sweating, in all of which he richly and enthusiastically participates. He is an excellent theorist of the "courtly" ethic but his practice steeps itself in the ordinary, mundane sphere where the coarse and the refined, the religious and the profane, lose their individual identity.

CHAPTER TWO

Criseyde and society

> But truly many of such writings as come under the banner of unresistible love, if I were a mistress, would never persuade me they were in love; so coldly they apply fiery speeches, as men that had rather read lovers' writings (and so caught up certain swelling phrases which hang together like a man which once told me the wind was at north-west and by south, because he would be sure to name winds enough), than that in truth they feel those passions.
>
> - Sidney, The Apology for Poetry

Sidney's exasperation over the artificiality of poetic outbursts of love in his own day is a reaction against the reductio ad absurdum that "paper-blurrers" (the phrase is his) constantly harping on worked and reworked themes had made of the romantic conception of love. But his statement also raises the query as to what constitutes credibility in the expression of the love-passion and how distinctions are to be made between stylized love and "the real thing." The question may also be phrased in this way: what is the relation between love as it is experienced and love as it is described, catalogued, fabled?

To such a question there is no single and easy answer. In all but the fundamentals Courtly Love too much resembles romantic love, and both are too often in alliance with (or a cover for) simple lust and passion, for any but the most tentative and qualified dissociations to be made; since it is usually by means of the less essential, more commonplace characteristics that love of whatever type is

usually expressed. This problem has been well realized by A. J. Denomy who, observing that love's irresistibility and its ennobling power are the twin sacred cows of Courtly Love continues thus:

> The other characteristics, conceits, and affectations are but trappings of these essential principles, assimilated to them as they might be assimilated to any other conception of human love. The personification of love as a god, the relationship of lover and beloved, his humility and timidity, her haughtiness and disdain, the physical manifestations of unrequited love, the moaning and groaning, wailing and whining, tears and sighs, the need of secrecy and stealth, the fear of gossip and scandalmongers are not peculiar to Courtly Love but are universally human and belong to the general body of love literature. It is, however, these very trappings -- so ludicrous when exaggerated -- that have obscured the essential factors of Courtly Love, have caused it to be confounded with romantic love, and have brought it so into disrepute among critics and historians of literature that its very existence in literature has been challenged.[1]

It is thus essential to note the problem at the beginning of a discussion on secular love because the "courtly" cult has frequently been visualized as a religion in confrontation with Christianity. However, this is only part of the dilemma. Inevitably, we are confronted with the subject of morality, indeed of conflicting moralities. On the one hand, the courtly love code has its own fibre of morality which exalts illicit sexual love and denies the existence of love in the married state; sense of honour or of shame arises not from guilt at the liaison but from discovery by any outside the very limited circle of those whose knowledge of the affair is conditional to its success and continued existence. On the other hand, there is erotic human love guided and governed by society's code of ethics. However, inasmuch as the examination of secular love is not here to be considered contrastively with Courtly Love but rather in the extent to which the development of plot and character reveal suggestively human motiva-

tions and interactions, the common frontiers between the two need not alarm or deter us: it is in the nature of things that these identities should exist.

The difficulty of assessing Criseyde has seldom, if ever, been due to the elusiveness of her character as a heroine of Courtly Love. Those critics (e.g., D. W. Robertson and T. A. Kirby) who have stressed her self-seeking and her love of "maisterye" within the code have invariably been able to conceive her rôle as consistent throughout. The majority of commentators, however, have insisted on the human qualities in her portrayal, including her doubts and fears relayed through dialogue and monologue, her reactions to love from within and without, her charms, and even her faults. She is neither the ideal lady of Courtly Love nor of romance; for above and beyond all those emblazons to her high excellence that rank her with these heroines -- "she koude as muche good / As half a world" (III, 638) -- stand out those dual traits which relate her as much to the world of reality as to the realm of the ideal. For this reason, her yielding spirit is first seen as a virtue when she decides "'I shal myn herte ayeins my lust constreyne'" (II, 476), and then as a vice when she relinquishes Troilus. The Narrator exactly pinpoints this duality when he speaks of her as "Tendre-herted, slydynge of corage" (V, 825). Her function in the poem can be seen as a depiction of the paradox of the human condition laid bare by the poet's insight into human psychology.

The defencelessness of the heroine has been referred to in

the last chapter, first of all in a political sense, as to whether she is citizen or alien, and secondly, when she succumbs to Pandarus' relentless thawing out of all her moral scruples regarding a love-match. The intermediary's chief tactic is minatory in character and the technique of suspense plays an important part in this. For someone whose citizenship has only recently been settled in her favour, the thought of falling foul of the king's son must seem terrible and the idea of causing his death extremely appalling. As a de facto fourteenth-century lady,[3] Criseyde would know about the social conventions governing conduct and courtship. She is therefore scandalized when Pandarus proposes to her to do away with her widow's habits and dance with him. In all probability she senses that as a widow she stands in a condition of virtue second only to the most perfect state of virtue -- virginity -- and she is anxious to preserve it. To this extent, her response to the invitation to dance -- "Lat maydens gon to daunce, and yonge wyves" (II, 119) -- is characteristic. But not so her initial response to the real proposal when it comes.

The fact is that to the deeply feeling Criseyde, Troilus' love-suit comes as an anticlimax to the crescendo of tension and fright that has been welling up within her. Her first suspicion was that this important matter which called for rejoicing was the cessation of the siege of Troy by the Greeks. When she hears that "It is a thing wel bet than swyche fyve" (II, 126), she is completely flabbergasted and remains so, lowering her eyes, wrestling with possibilities, catching her uncle by the lapel of his coat when he makes a

feint at departure, trembling and colouring at intervals. The instinctive tears that the artful and amorous Criseida had suppressed here break forth in a pathetic outburst that is as highly charged with genuine frustration and disappointment as it is a mirroring of her own breaking of faith in the Greek camp. She cries out

> "Allas, for wo! Why nere I deed?
> For of this world the feyth is al agoon.
> Allas! what sholden straunge to me doon,
> When he, that for my beste frend I wende,
> Ret me to love, and sholde it me defende?" (II, 409-413)

Thus, in spite of all Pandarus' careful and skilful presentation, he cannot blunt the edges of the crime he is committing in declaring the love of Troilus or dampen the severity of the vice he is counselling his niece to plunge herself into. Criseyde seems to understand fully the implications of her welcoming the advances of Troilus. Otherwise she would not be so full of bitter reproach. The animadversions of Pandarus ring hollow to her, in view of her knowledge, through hearsay, of the sorrows of love. Point for point she therefore rebuts all his arguments in a series of interrogatory anaphora that require no answer:

> "What! is this al the joye and al the feste?
> Is this youre reed? Is this my blisful cas?
> Is this the verray mede of youre byheeste?
> Is al this paynted proces seyd, allas!
> Right for this fyn?" (II, 421-425)

The influence wielded by the interlocutor over his niece cannot be gainsayed. If Criseyde seems very perceptive at this point, she owes the leads of her reply to her uncle. Her summary labelling of his overtures as a "peynted proces" is a direct borrowing of his

own words (II, 262 and 292); under his relentless prodding she soon begins to yield, promising to bend her heart against her wishes (II, 476). The same trend follows through to the great consummation where Pandarus foists off each dilatory attempt of hers to postpone the inevitable. She ultimately surrenders and next morning berates him somewhat for causing "al this fare" (III, 1566). Again, when the Troy Parliament decides to send Criseyde away, she takes a hint from Pandarus to "destourbe" her going or come back after a while and proposes the latter, presumably because it is an alternative that has a more distant execution than the former.[4]

In her first scene with Pandarus in the poem she tries to assert her independence of thought and action: she will not love Troilus against her wishes, nor will she brook any extension of the terms of friendship she has accepted. But the extent of the influence that his words have on her is revealed when, alone after Pandarus' hasty withdrawal, Criseyde ponders over the dilemma, weighing and weighting the options for and against love. Even before he hurries away, the success of Pandarus' plying of the heroine is already in evidence. After warning the intermediary againt further importunity on his or on Troilus' part, she cannot suppress her curiosity about the hero's passion, and she asks first how Pandarus had come to know about the predicament of his friend and then whether Troilus is well-versed in talking about love -- a curiosity that encourages Pandarus' brazenness in attempting to stretch his luck on this first skirmish.

Pandarus' success with the heroine is further confirmed when

she retires into her closet and thinks over all that he has said concerning the "newe cas" (II, 604). At this juncture, Chaucer inserts a glimpse of the armed Troilus returning after routing the Greeks, giving her the opportunity of witnessing his virtuous chivalry[5] and of reflecting on whether to let him perish or save him through her pity. That Criseyde seriously believes he will die if she does not save him is not an indication of her naieveté so much as it is a reflection of a popular myth. The very fact that Criseyde has already married once but is yet to fall in love for the first time is something that would stun a present day Western audience but one that Chaucer's milieu -- and thus the heroine set within that context -- would accept with equanimity.

It becomes apparent that most of Criseyde's reluctance stems from fear and uncertainty about many things: her own independence once she pledges herself to love; the joys of love; the continued steadfastness of lovers; wicked slandering tongues, and the like. It must however be said on her behalf that the only thing of certainty she knows about love is its sorrows and her musings are thus empty of any counter-balancing between happiness and unhappiness: the oppositions are seen in terms of "sikernesse" outside the realms of love and "jupartee" within, either "libertee" or "thraldom." In other words, she is considering whether it is wise to consent to love Troilus simply because it is the fashionable thing to do, and any thought of the value of love <u>per se</u> plays no part in her meditations. Her arguments are negated, interestingly enough, by her young niece Antigone, who

sings to Love in the garden all innocent of her aunt's earlier soul-searching monologue. These lines from her song are particularly relevant:

> "And whoso seith that for to love is vice,
> Or thraldom, though he feele in it destresse,
> He outher is envyous, or right nyce,
> Or is unmyghty, for his shrewednesses,
> To loven: for swich manere folke, I gesse,
> Defamen Love, as nothing of him knowe." (II, 855-860)

Her dialogue with her niece shows Criseyde [redacted] to be an ignoramus about love; she can be classed without difficulty among the folk who are "unmyghty" about love, not to mention the "nyce fare" of which Pandarus keeps accusing her in her dealings with Troilus.

Criseyde learns from her niece about the bliss of love in time for Pandarus' next visit when he brings a love-letter from Troilus. More importantly, perhaps, the first pangs of love make her heart twitch as she stands watching Troilus ride past in triumph. The garden scene and Troilus' triumphal entry, coupled with the dream that she has about this time (II, 918-931), make her more susceptible to the entreaties of Pandarus acting as the agent of the lover; she begins to fall in love and she is not so terrified of love as she was before.

One must not lend a deaf ear to the Narrator's emphasis on the gradual nature of Criseyde's falling in love (II, 666-679). Pandarus, the arch schemer, does not ignore this fact, since he continues to poke "evere his nece newe and newe" in situations that suggest a punning on the loving "nece" as a "nyce" lover. In truth, however, there is more than the interlocutor's adroitness at work and only when

we appreciate this can we justify some of Criseyde's actions during this phase. Thus, although she had forbidden it, she goes on to approve Troilus' solicitations relayed through the ubiquitous go-between partly because her ideas about Troilus and about love itself undergo some modification in the interim. Yet she feels compelled to ward off the letter, bidding her uncle to rate her honour higher than Troilus' desires. That she is soon ensconced in her closet reading the letter that Pandarus bludgeons her to take possession of is additional validation of the view that she is curious and fascinated over something of which she has heard much but experienced little. All the same, the ground she yields at this stage of the game is not considerable, paying due regard to the external and internal forces that impinge upon her. During this first encounter she will admit only friendship between herself and Troilus. After she has received and read Troilus' love-letter she tells his emissary that she would wish to love him in secret "if she myghte" and that the utmost reward she would allow would be the privilege of sight (II, 1293-1295).

A valid case can be made that Criseyde is merely temporizing here. She suggests this herself when she declares that it is too soon to grant Troilus any liberties beyond those of seeing her. This view can be substantiated from what the audience knows about her reflections, the dream she has of the eagle exchanging his heart for hers and the Narrator's comment that she "covered [her] wordes under sheld" (II, 1326). What is beyond all doubt is that her uncle refuses to take her statement as the last word on the subject (II, 1296-

1298) and so lays plans for bringing about a speedy capitulation. His perceptive insight into the impasse that here develops is demonstrated when he dramatizes Troilus' thoughts on the issue: in spite of the natural impulse to love that the heroine feels, fear holds her back so that "though she bende, yeet she stant on roote" (II, 1373-1378). To counteract this, Pandarus invents a case against the lady and engineers her into a position where she is dependent on the benevolence of Troilus and his immediate relatives. Her need to yield is now not just to save Troilus but herself as well.

Another step is therefore made towards gratification when Criseyde comes to Troilus as he lies in bed feigning illness in the course of her visit to Deiphobus' house to seek support for her defence against a fictional "false Poliphete." In this scene she fully accepts him into her service but warns him not to try to exercise too much sway over her in love because she will not brook this even though he is a king's son. Troilus' fortunes rise from acceptance as a brother to an expression of willingness to love unilaterally to full commission as a lover. Still, admission to the perfect bliss of love is as remote as ever in view not only of Criseyde's indifferent co-operation but also because of the sheer impracticability (or so it seems) of their getting together without arousing suspicion. Future progress is thus dependent on an "if." The lady will no longer dissimulate, she promises, but will maintain their love on her part -- "myn honour sauf" (III, 480) -- and make him happy <u>if</u> she can.

After this complete commitment on her part to a love-link,

little of the counterfeiting, calculating lady that many critics have seen in the lady shows forth. She comes to rely completely on her hero and, by all accounts, on the efficacy of love. She apparently considers herself to be living in the full bliss of love, content with the knowledge that there is someone whom she loves who loves her also. On their side Pandarus and Troilus do not believe the bliss is complete enough, while the Narrator is careful to point out that the relationship is maintained on this side of propriety. In order to bring their love to a physical climax, Pandarus unrolls his most complicated machinery involving weather forecasting and stage-setting. When the forecasted bad weather induces Criseyde to spend the night at his house, he comes in through a trap-door and tells her of Troilus' sufferings occasioned by jealousy. The naturally sympathetic Criseyde promptly promises to settle everything -- in the morning. This of course runs counter to Pandarus' prepared text and he dispassionately laughs it out of court. The ring she subsequently proffers is similarly laughed off and Criseyde, finding herself "At dulcarnoun, right at [her] wittes ende" (III, 930), yields passively.

In the great consummation scene the poet deploys a number of nature images accentuating the triumph of Nature, as it were, while at the same time blunting the details and inviting the imagination to fill in the picture. In this sense, the lovers participate in the celebration of the common bond of love that they share with all sentient creatures and the erotic imagery invokes the sensuality of the union by the very act of blurring the sexual orgies of the lovers:

reduced to bare essentials the sexual act is coarse and ridiculous[6] and Chaucer is too sensitive a poet to portray it except by suggestion.

This is perhaps the point at which to re-examine some conclusions that have been reached about Criseyde's character. She has been depicted as cold and calculating, preoccupied with "soveraynete," self-seeking, and downright hypocritical. In the foregoing assessment of her contribution to the development of the drama up to the final fruition of Eros, some effort was made to evaluate the influence of externals (most notably that of Pandarus) and of internal action, the last showing forth in her fearful, reflective nature which was stigmatized into the perception of a deepening love for Troilus. If these factors are alloted their due importance, a more lenient view of her may be arrived at. A most important preliminary is her placement in medieval society amid the conventions of love and courtesy as were then in vogue. This procedure reconciles the apparent incongruity of her conjuring up some elements of "courtly" doctrine and practice that she knows about and believes in even though they have not yet been "proved upon the pulses." Her response to the bombardments of Pandarus thus constitute a cleavage between her desire to uphold the social conventions and a natural desire to love; this cleavage is at the root of her temporizing.

Her temporizing itself has more than one motive. In the first place convention demanded it.[7] But, also, it is symptomatic of her natural hesitancy and fear and this element in her constitution is what Uncle Pandarus exploits to the utmost. Just when the heroine

begins to feel safe and secure he thrusts in a wedge that threatens to ruin all. More than this, Criseyde seems to view things with "the eye of childhood / That fears a painted devil" and unquestioningly adheres to Pandarus's thesis that only her concession to Troilus can save his life.

Her innocence of Pandarus' designs is another matter that has often been called in question. If she does not know, the critics would argue, does she not suspect that Troilus would be at the house of Pandarus? No doubt this is possible and she would be suspicious with good reason. For at Deiphobus' house Pandarus had already hinted at the idea of bringing them together at his own house, a suggestion that in her imagined plight Criseyde could not oppose as she had done during the earlier stages when she had threatened to dismiss the whole matter if Pandarus and Troilus overplayed their hand. But, then, she is also a woman in love. Her honour, that she is so anxious to keep unsullied, is not the upkeep of her chastity for she is not "religious"; she is instead intent on keeping their love hidden from the slanderers who would publish it abroad and wake up reproach and defamation of her character. If she suspected that Troilus would somehow be there, she keeps all inkling of this to herself and relies on the indefatigable strategist to do nothing to compromise her.

Again, Criseyde's ready forgiveness of the intermediary on the morning following the night of consummation is tempered by this approach to the subject of her honour. Her uncle had not made her lose her honour, only tricked her into an early submission to her loved

one. The incisive reproach with which she greets his vulgar banter in matching commonness of language provokes Pandarus' cure-all for her "nyce fare": the threat of death[8] duly stops her scolding, but it is her tender nature that forgives.

As regards the charge of her love of "sovereignty," one need only remark that in the episode where she accepts Troilus into her service, she talks not of her own sovereignty over her newly conscripted lover but of his own dominion over her, that is, beyond what "right in that cas is" (III, 172). If one wishes to pursue the matter further, one can add that Criseyde is simply trying to restore the balance between herself and Troilus. First of all, the sick Troilus is unable to kneeel to her, true courtly lover that he is; and secondly, she has to establish that she is not consenting either because of his princely state or as a reward for his promise to help her in her distress.[9] Moreover, her deportment vis-à-vis Troilus is never that of the heroine of courtly love and the Narrator too does not depict her in that light in her dealings with the hero -- a fact that this example taken at random corroborates:

> For whi she fond hym so discret in al,
> So secret, and of swich obeisaunce,[10]
> That wel she felt he was to hire a wal
> Of stiel, and sheld from every displeasaunce;
> That <u>to ben in his goode governaunce</u>,
> So wis he was, she was namore afered... [my underlining]
> (III, 477-482)

The purpose of this examination of the heroine's character is not an attempt to "place" her or defend her. It is only a scrupulous (and one hopes circumspect) apprehension of her actions and

reactions designed to discourage judgments of her that might be too hasty. At best her character is one of "consistent ambiguity"[11] which cannot be properly assessed apart from the many conflicting situations in which she finds herself. What makes her human, and charmingly so, is her responsiveness, her sincere attempts to conform, her loveableness and her humour, her doubts and fears which are, after all, a part of the human condition. Her simple wisdom tells her that life is meaningless without accommodation, sympathy and compromise -- traits that occur and recur in all her dealings. Neither her laughter nor her tears seem extravagant, and when joy comes to her, it is not difficult to forget to call up our moral condemnation of an adulterous liaison and rejoice in her happiness. But is not this to forget her later infidelity?

Many critics are apt to treat the consummation and the betrayal as the work of two different heroines.[12] So alluring is the lady who yields her all to Troilus that one finds it incredible for her to withdraw from him and submit herself to another man. Besides, it is pointed out, the earlier heroine was too fervent in her love to have renounced her beloved. How could she redress all those vows of constancy and devotion that she had made and allow herself to be forsworn, if her character has not changed? This sort of scepticism is a way of saying that the poet has not kept his artistic creation even throughout the poem.[13] The defendants of a coldly calculating conception of the heroine find her treachery in character because they know that she has been a self-seeker all along. They claim that her

charms are a mere enchantment, a front for the vicious and cold-blooded egocentric that the real Criseyde is.

Those who defend her consistency have pointed out, for example, the element of fear that may have been her ruling passion.[14] Connected with this is the altogether tenable suggestion that Criseyde has grown to need someone and Diomede is handy enough to fill the gap. The processed wheedling she undergoes at the hands of Pandarus supports such a theory for Diomede fulfils unassisted the rôles of both Pandarus and Troilus as go-between and suitor rolled in one.[15] Another possibility is the physical impracticability of deceiving father and evading Greeks and going back to Troy. But, assuming that it was feasible for her to return, there are two distinct considerations that the heroine must first take note of.

The first of these involves a number of questions. Granted that Criseyde were to return safely to Troy, to what would she be returning? To a city which had considered banishing her on account of her father's deeds and quite immorally given her up to their enemy. She would be <u>persona non grata</u> and liable to the law. And again, what reason could she give for coming back that she could not have given before her departure? Frankly none, if we judge by the plans she made for deceiving her father. Finally, allowing for the miracle of her forgiveness and rehabilitation, what are her chances of a continued existence in comparative security and with full assurance of her former relations with Troilus? Without a Hector to commiserate with her, the chances are very remote indeed.

To a thinking, feeling being such as we have come to regard Criseyde, thoughts of this nature must have occurred time and again in the course of her early sojourn among the Greeks. No longer in the reassuring arms of Troilus or within the sphere of influence of her uncle, she must have taken time off for sober reflection. There is nothing so moving or so tragic in her situation as her recognition of the phases she has been going through and the effects of her decision to stay in the Greek camp. She had made "a virtue of necessity" in surrendering herself to Troilus, but she cannot make a necessity of the virtue to be true to him in the altered circumstances in the enemy camp. Her former yielding had been made in joy and yearning for an elusive happiness. Her subsequent capitulation is made in despair by one who sees clearly the course she should have taken; it is the road not taken. Her compromise plan -- "To Diomede algate I wol be trewe" (V, 1071) -- is an open-eyed decision to relinquish the worthy love of Troilus for a brand that she knows is by far inferior. Her quibbling in the letter she writes to Troilus, like the "abominable"[16] accusation she makes in flagrant contradiction of her earlier tribute (V, 1074-1077), is a wilful subterfuge by someone up against a wall: it stresses rather than detracts from the full-blooded etching of her character. Her spirit of compromise is a significant contribution to the tragic pattern that she follows. In an ideal world a like pliancy would have been an unmitigated virtue. But "Swich is the world, whoso it can byholde" (V, 1748). Criseyde cannot, or cannot soon enough, see the world for what it is. The

gulf between decision and execution is for her an ever-widening chasm that she sees always gaping close to her and which she must flee or plunge into -- there is no bridge on which to cross. She flies, pursued by cries of reproach and shame and ends up in the mire which pulls her down in slow, compelling degrees.

It was remarked at the beginning of this chapter that secular love takes its cue from the ethics of society. However, in so far as it is associated with a romantic concept of love this ascription calls for modification. On the one hand, lovers will always insist on interpreting the injunctions and taboos of society in their own way. When, as I have indicated, society requires honour, the requirement can be met with ostensibly by keeping everything risqué or abominable severely out of sight. The command "Do not engage in activities that would injure your honour" receives the interpretation "Do not injure your honour by failing to take the required precautions to guard against the slander of evil tongues." In short, be discreet, take proper safeguards.

On the other hand, because Eros is of an essentially selfish[17] caste, its devotees are always isolating themselves. Love is exclusive; it breaks all barriers, it loves the object itself and will sacrifice all else for the beloved; it knows no laws except its own; hence (to complete the extended syllogism) the laws of society cannot apply to it. Lovers operating from such a perspective will always be setting themselves against society just/as adherents of Courtly Love opposed the Church. We are here in the deep waters of romanti-

cism especially as it flourished in the Renaissance. But we have already seen in the case of court poetry versus Christianity how readily concepts moved back and forth. In the great decade of the 1590's when the young men of fashion were outdoing each other in the sport of love poetry, Donne the "metaphysician" displayed his skill and sophistry ridiculing and defending romantic concepts by turns in a number of the Songs and Sonets that he produced during this period. The Canonization seems to blend the two, a caution from his interlocutor to withdraw from love being impatiently dismissed by the almost proudly unlovely poet. Shakespeare, for his part, celebrates at once the ideal, beautiful union of minds and the savage and cruel passion of lust within the same sonnet sequence[18] and dedicates a play to the drama of a couple that gives up all for love.[19]

The couple who attain fruition of their love in Chaucer's Troilus preach such a doctrine of love as do Antony and Cleopatra but they do not carry it out. It is not that an elopement is unknown in their society. Far from it. If we try to forget this, the astute diplomatist who is Troilus' ambassador promptly reminds us. He points out that Troilus' brother, Paris, has the ravished Helen with him in Troy. He however suppresses the fact Troilus recalls in his rejoinder, namely, that Troy "hath al this werre / For ravysshyng of wommen so by myght." Troilus does not see such a course as Pandarus suggests as a wrong to right another wrong:

> "It sholde noughte be suffred me to erre,
> As it stant now, ne don so gret unright.
> I sholde han also blame of every wight,
> My fadres graunt if that I so withstoode,

Syn she is chaunged for the townes goode. (IV, 547-553)

How bitterly ironic the last line is is already made clear owing to the Narrator's comment about Antenor's later treachery (IV, 202-205). In general terms, it is an "ensample" of the inherent paradox in many of our worldly endeavours, that our present acts of discretion may lead to misfortune as much as our rash actions. In the world of the poem it is an echo of the nagging sense of futility that pervades its atmosphere: people do good that evil may come. The faithful and just men suffer and die, the evil live on. Troilus foregoes the precipitate course here so that Criseyde can take the blame; in her all too short and sudden "avysement" she unwittingly strikes at the core of the problem when she says,

> "Lo, Troilus, men seyn that hard it is
> The wolf ful, and the wether hool to have;
> This is to seyn, that men ful ofte, iwis,
> Mote spenden part the remnant for to save." (IV, 1373-1376)

Criseyde's philosophy runs counter to that of Troilus. Troilus would have it both ways; he would let her go for the good of society and still keep her for his own. His passion stems from the frenzy, the fluctuation of the courtly lover blowing hot and cold from the fire of love or, as in Books IV and V, from the narcissism of the romantic lover. Criseyde is not anti-romantic, or anti-courtly. In Troilus' company she can rise to all that is expected of the heroine of romance or of courtly love. But when she is alone or isolated -- whether in her closet or in the Greek host -- she shows more of the traits that belong to ordinary human nature. Her primary concern was not love itself but its appurtenances -- "sikernesse" and

the related "liberte." This concern explains why, during her first few days in the Greek camp, she exclaims in the middle of her trepidations, "Felicite clepe I my suffisaunce" (V, 763), and why she resigns the worthier love of Troilus for what she can get from Diomede. Troilus had a fixation on Criseyde as an object of complete devotion. Thus, while Criseyde can welcome a reduced sense of security from Diomede, Troilus cannot take up another lover. His intransigence will be analysed in the next chapter in which he is reviewed in the guise of a man upholding false values in a Christian cosmos.

CHAPTER THREE

Troilus and Christianity

The ending of the Troilus is flat, unequivocal, uncompromising. The tone of the utterance is assured, assertive and matter-of-fact. It contrasts sharply with the uncertain and ambiguous narration of the events which bring to a close the development of the story of Troilus' double sorrow interrupted by a period of felicity. And it sends us back to a fresh appraisal of the narrative which a new perspective demands:

> O yonge, fresshe folkes, he or she,
> In which that love up groweth with youre age,
> Repeyreth hom fro worldly vanyte,
> And of youre herte up casteth the visage
> To thilke God that after his ymage
> Yow made, and thynketh al nys but a faire
> This world, that passeth soone as floures faire.
>
> And loveth hym, the which that right for love
> Upon a crois, our soules for to beye,
> First starf, and roos, and sit in hevene above;
> For he nyl falsen no wight, dar I seye,
> That wol his herte al holly on hym leye.
> And syn he best to love is, and most meke,
> What nedeth feynede loves for to seke? (V, 1835-1848)

The focussing of an indubitable Christian ethic at the end of the poem is as unexpected as it is fitting. It arrests and illuminates all the veiled or half-formed suggestions and innuendoes of a Christian theology and invites a consideration of the poem as an elaborate de casibus tragedy, in the spirit of those of the Monk's Tale. Such a change of tone, however, requires some investigation of the principles

of medieval tragedy.

Boethius' De Consolatione Philosophiae is a standard text for medieval doctrines of tragedy under a Christian dispensation. Closely ingrained into this concept of tragedy is the teaching on the disposition of the universe by God, delegating His powers respectively to Providence, Destiny and Fortune in diminishing degrees of intensity and therefore of reliability.[1] There are other supernatural powers that influence the lives of men, in particular the motion of the planets and the stars of which the moon is the nearest and most potent. And there is also the notion of free-will to the extent that this is possible within a deterministic framework. Fortune, as the power furthest removed from the central intelligence, is thus represented as a volatile soul whose wheel is constantly turning and whose face is now bright and auspicious, now withdrawn and unfriendly. She it is who brings joy or woe to mankind, whether individually or collectively. Her importance in human actions cannot, then, be contradicted, so that it is Fortune that we see touching most nearly the lives of the protagonists in the Troilus.[2]

Of all the characters in the poem it is Pandarus who is most knowledgeable about Fortune; ironically, he is also the character who is least advanced in Fortune's favour. On the other hand, Troilus who gains most from her also suffers most, it appears, and seems to know least about the vagaries of Fortune.

According to medieval lore, Fortune's gifts are common to all, as the erudite Pandarus well knows (I, 843-844). This idea is deve-

loped by the Narrator into another principle, found in Boethius, that of the universal bond of love.[3] The teaching of this principle is, that as Love is universal, so it is inescapable since "may no man fordon the lawe of kynde" (I, 238). As Love is universal and unavoidable, so too it is "vertuous in kynde" (I, 254) -- which is why Pandarus would "holde it for a vice" (I, 987) if Criseyde (who "vertuous is al" I, 898) were to refuse "A worthi knyght to loven and cherice" (I, 986).

Another aspect of Fortune's work was construed to be involvement in the individual lots of men; here it was that her vagaries were most in evidence. Most of the misfortunes of love and war are consequently heaped on the shoulders of the fickle goddess. It is in this very area of operation that she brings Troilus into the den of woe in love, raises him aloft to the heights of joy and fulfilment and equally breathtakingly casts him down into the depths of despair and death. This cyclical (or at any rate changeful) process is properly recognized by the doctrinaire Pandarus. In counselling the hero to love he rebuffs Troilus for blaming Fortune out of anger. He declaims that

> ... "as hire joies moten overgon,
> So mote hire sorwes passen everechon.
>
> "For if hire whiel stynte any thyng to torne,
> Than cessed she Fortune anon to be." (I, 846-849)

Again, when Troilus is assured of Criseyde's favours and has already spent a night of pure rapture with her, Pandarus issues another caution on Fortune to the now self-confident amorist:

"Bridle alwey thi speche and thi desir,
For worldly joie halt nought but by a wir. (III, 1635-1636)

As Troilus does not quite understand this, he passes lightly over the friendly advice, for he thinks that as long as he comports himself well he has nothing to fear from Fortune (III, 1639-1643). His mistake is the crux of the whole issue: Fortune is no respecter of persons. She does not reward everyone according to his deserts for she is arbitrary. To believe that good deportment is sufficient libation to the goddess is in effect to do what Pandarus had so clearly mapped out, that is, try to stop her wheel from turning, forcing her to be always stable or to be always patronizing. In so doing, Troilus makes himself readily vulnerable. His blindness to the true nature of the goddess Fortuna begets his downfall and projects tragedy.

Troilus' disaster would seem inevitable to the medieval mind even if much of the poem did not have a deterministic flavour. Medieval doctrine popularized the idea of original sin which made everyone a sinner and in dire need of grace.[4] The Church taught that man had a tendency toward sin which was always trying to drag him downwards but that this impulse was to be rejected by the individual's turning his back from worldly things which were vain, ephemeral and hazardous and by his placing a steadfast faith on God whose love and truth were unflagging and unfailing. Seen in such a light, Troilus' fate becomes a misplacement of his love and trust not simply on Fortune's beneficence but on the whole gamut of earthly splen-

dour which includes Criseyde "and swych rascaille."

When one examines the poem with the repudiation of all terrestrial things in mind, it is possible to elicit ample evidence from its development that would allow a thoroughgoing Christian interpretation. To begin with, then, Troilus commits the sin of Pride[5] -- chief of the Seven Deadly Sins in the Gregorian hierarchy -- by imagining himself to be beyond the reach of the snares of love that have brought sorrow to many a lover. Let us consider his first speech in the poem:

> "I have herd told, pardieux, of youre lyvynge,
> Ye loveres, and youre lewed observaunces,
> And which a labour folk han in wynnynge
> Of love, and in the kepyng which doutaunces;
> And whan youre prey is lost, woo and penaunces.
> O veray fooles, nyce and blynde be ye!
> Ther nys nat oon kan war by other be." (I, 197-203)

This speech (especially the last line) is trenchant with irony in the light of our knowledge about the hero's subsequent perpetration of everyone of the faults for which he berates unfortunate lovers in this episode. Even if one knew nothing of the succeeding events, the Narrator is sufficiently provoked by this to make him supply a gloss that leaves nothing in doubt. Here is part of his remark on this blatant evidence of false pride:

> And with that word he gan cast up the browe
> Ascaunces, "Loo! is this naught wisely spoken?"
> . . . . . .
> O blynde world, O blynde entencioun!
> How often falleth al the effect contraire
> Of surquidrie and foul presumpcioun;
> For kaught is proud, and kaught is debonaire.
> This Troilus is clomben on the staire,
> And litel weneth that he moot descenden;
> But alday faileth thing that fooles wenden. (I, 205-217)

Judged from the standpoint of medieval Christian theology, practically all of Troilus' later sufferings boomerang from his basic sin of Pride. It is Pride that blinds him to his own insufficiency in the first instance and makes him afterwards to "dissimulen and hide" his woe. Next he deliberately chooses to love the lady (I, 379) and in his first hymn to Love declares that he consents to love and is therefore unjustly complaining about his malady. One of the prime attributes of Pride is that it blinds the individual to the true worth of things, making him see evil as good and good evil. This is precisely what overtakes Troilus and makes him impervious to the admonitions of his friend and emissary, as we have already noted.

To use Chaucer's own representational terms, Troilus as courtly lover enters the "game" of Love when he accepts Pandarus' bid for the rôle of intermediary. At any rate, this is the spirit in which Pandarus conducts the whole affair -- in a business-like but still playful and pleasant manner. Thus when he first encounters the heroine in his friend's interest, it is through play that he tries to edge in his subject, asking the sober widow to rise and dance with him. Their second meeting sees the interlocutor talking airily and flippantly about his "joly wo, [his] lusty sorwe (II, 1099) when he and his niece come to talk about his progress in love's "daunce." Later in the same scene he reproaches her for having "played the tirant, neigh to longe" (II, 1240). Criseyde, too, whose sense of humour often sparkles in her uncle's company, reminds him after his first veiled hint of his subject-matter (II, 85 ff.) that his "mais-

tresse is nat here" (II, 98); afterwards, when she hears of Troilus' love she decides to "pleye" "ful sleighly" (II, 462); and finally promises (III, 167) not to pretend any longer. Pursuing further the game of winning Criseyde, Pandarus concocts a scheme for getting a private conference between her and Troilus at the house of Deiphobus and counsels the already sick Troilus to feign illness.

But it is in the third book that the game comes to be pursued in real earnest, launched, it would seem, by Pandarus' confession to Troilus:

> "For the have I bigonne a gamen pleye,
> Which that I nevere do shal eft for other,
> Although he were a thousand fold my brother.
>
> "That is to seye, for the am I bicomen,
> Bitwixen game and ernest, swich a meene
> As maken wommen unto men to comen... (III, 250-255)

After this he puts his most ambitious and most complicated plan into effect, that of uniting the two lovers. The image of the "lette-game" (III, 527)[6] is brought in to bear on the timeliness of all his designs which begin to yield fruit when Criseyde decides to pass the night at Pandarus' house on account of the rainstorm, speaking in this fashion:

> "I am right glad with yow to dwellen here;
> I seyde but a-game, I wolden go." (III, 647-648)

When Troilus is pushed to the corner for an explanation of his hypothetical jealousy, he is at a loss for words and finally blurts out:

> ... "God woot that of this game,
> Whan al is wist, than am I nought to blame. (III, 1084-1085)

Following this, the heroine, echoing Pandarus' censure of the distrac-

ted hero (III, 1098) queries Troilus: "Is this a mannes game?" (III, 1126).

To and fro the butt is passed around from emissary to hero, between emissary and heroine and between hero and heroine. But for all this they do not accept the game in the same spirit. Pandarus is all flexibility and is ready to change the game when it brings in diminishing returns. Criseyde is passive and lets herself be enticed into another "juparte." But the intractable Troilus has made a real earnest of the game and is caught in the snare. As a result, both hero and heroine suffer, the one out of neglect and the other from regret. But Troilus is the more tragic figure because he is unable to accommodate himself to vicissitude or catastrophe. He moves in an "up-so-doun" plane, inverting reality and unreality, steadfastness and duplicity, the ephmeral and the enduring.

The outcome of their affair shows that they have been making a game of love. Since Fortune is the presiding deity over gaming or gambling, there is no certainty in such an undertaking. Fortune had been "on-loft" at the beginning, thus auguring well for their game and justifying the Narrator's declaration about the succession of adversity by prosperity (III, 1060-1064). Now, however, she is "under-eft" making Criseyde's admonition towards patience on the score of their possible flight an exercise in futility:

> "And if so be that pees heere-after take,
> As alday happeth after anger game,
> Whi, Lord, the sorwe and wo ye wolden make,

> That ye ne dorst come ayeyn for shame!
> And er that ye juparten so youre name,
> Beth naught to hastif in this hoote fare;
> For hastif man ne wanteth nevere care." (IV, 1562-1568)

Returning to a Christian ethic of tragedy in a medieval context, it is time to observe that the sin of Pride, heading as it does the list of the Sins is itself capable of generating other aberrations. Thus, as with January in the Merchant's Tale, Troilus is blinded by Pride and is led to Cupidity or Covetousness by the sight of Criseyde. Other sins follow, principally Lechery and Anger, apart from the subsidiary sins under these various broad divisions.[7] Blindness, imposed by Pride, makes the hero lose his sense of proportion and judgment -- a liability that arises from sin in general, as the Parson reminds us in his sermon at the end of The Canterbury Tales: "But soothly, when man synneth, al this ordre or ordinaunce is turned up-so-doun" (X, I, 262). Troilus thus becomes wilfully stubborn, refusing to give up Criseyde because in the inverted order created by his Pride he has come to see her as the greatest good, taking precedence over everything else. No wonder, then, that in his grief he is willing, as it were, to curse God and die:

> ... "deth!" he criede;
> And in his throwes frenetik and madde
> He corseth Ceres, Bacus, and Cipride,
> His burthe, hymself, his fate, and ek nature,
> And save his lady, every creature. (V, 204-210)

From the vantage of figural symbolism in a Christian ethos, Troilus is seen to relive and renew the archetypal Fall of Man. One recalls the representative garden in Book II where Criseyde's niece sings of the bliss of Love. In answer to her aunt's inquiry, she

affirms that few people know "the parfite blisse of love" (II, 891). She refers the question to the saints in heaven and the fiends in hell who should know about the extremes of love (II, 894-896).

The basic sin of the fall was an act of disobedience brought about by Woman's frailty and Man's pride. Significantly, after the couple in Milton's epic have both eaten of the forbidden fruit, they begin to indulge in the lusts of the flesh. In the Troilus we notice the hero's pride which leads him to invert the true value of things; there is collusion between him and his trusted friend, Pandarus, to seduce the lady. With the object achieved, lover and beloved "gan otheres lust obeye" (III, 1690) working busily to fulfil their passions, oblivious of everything except what would perpetuate their love. They ascribe their well-being and happiness to their mutual love and place their complete trust in each other and in nothing else. Here again the error lies in distorting values and in wrong love.

Medieval Church doctrine taught that the only love which was worthwhile and efficacious was the love of God. Love that moves from the Creator to mankind was charity or gift-love, proceeding from a loving and merciful God to a sinful and undeserving creation of His. This unmotivated love arose not according to man's deserts but in spite of them. Man need only return God's love, on condition that it be pure and exclusive. This love is vitiated by sin and is in opposition to the physical love in man which always prompted him to love the things of the flesh, whether worldly goods or lust of

passion fulfilled in sexual love.[8] Because the Middle Ages preached that all physical love -- whether within marriage or outside it -- had this tendency to interfere with our love of God and was therefore undesirable though permissible with due restraint in the married state, the act of confusing the two loves was anathema. Focussed through the spectrum of a medieval Christian doctrine the fault of Troilus looms large and parallels that of Adam. Like the hero in the Roman de la Rose he had surmounted Daunger, Malbouche, Fear and Shame with the help of Belacueil, stepped boldly forth and plucked the Rose and tasted its sweetness and nothing is ever the same again.

In the final analysis, an assessment of man's sin in the world has to come to grips with criteria such as God's foreknowledge, Destiny and Fate, of which there is no lack in the Troilus. The fatalism of the hero is very often instanced in connection with the "deep sense of overruling Destiny" that enshrouds the whole poem, especially in Troilus' celebrated and controversial predestination soliloquy in the fourth book. In this speech the hero prefaces his own conclusion to the long drawn-out argument taken from the fifth book of the Consolatio:

> "For al that comth, comth by necessitee:
> Thus to ben lorn, it is my destinee." (IV, 958-959)

During his monologue this point is affirmed and reaffirmed (IV, 1044-50, 51-59, 64-71, 72-78), leaving us in no doubt as to his convictions.

Indubitably the encasing of the poem within a settled, deterministic frame will have important consequences for an appraisal of the characters' culpability and thus of the whole moral of the poem.

The paradox inherent in an existence that is predestined but which allows free-will is a recurrent one in literature and philosophy.[9] It is an expedient that helps us avoid having either wax figures or picaresque types all the time. As Howard Patch notes,

> Reflection may be added to pity and terror if one has the conviction that one can affect one's own destiny in part, and that the future is something more than a question of mere luck. In comparison, an entirely fatalistic tragedy seems less rich in variety and to many will appear even warped as a picture of life.[10]

Troilus' asseverations to the contrary, Destiny does not have the strangle-hold over the characters that it is often assigned.

This last point can be demonstrated by reference to particular moments in the course of the action where some choice is available to the personages in the story, even though every other alternative than the one they accept is equally unpalatable. Justifiably, too, one can refer to their own attitude to the Fates, since their convictions are also relevant. Limiting our scrutiny to the two enamoured protagonists and the space of time between the crisis of consummation and the crisis of separation, we detect them both attesting to the evanescence of worldly joy and happiness. Criseyde's response to Troilus' jealousy is a performance that concludes with the point-blank assertion that "Ther is no verray weele in this world heere" (III, 836). Similarly, her conclusion, after the decision to exchange her for Antenor (addressed, like the first, to Pandarus), is that love and all worldly bliss end in woe (IV, 834-835). On his part, Troilus' codicil to his deterministic exercise reveals that despite his belief that earthly love and bliss in general culminate in woe, he, like Criseyde,

nevertheless wants to break the rule in his own case; thus he prays to Jove to make him die or to bring back his loved one (1079-1081). Taken all together, these serve as a reminder for the poem's audience that while they know for certain what the result is going to be, the characters are unaware and so can hope to win by offering a sop to the powers that be.

The final outcome of the love of Troilus and Criseyde proves that their faith and hope had been in vain. The great Apostle, Paul, has taught that there are three things, namely, faith, hope and charity, but that the greatest of these is charity. From a Christian viewpoint, the preoccupation of hero and heroine was with libidinous love which, as Hugh of St Victor preached, and as the Pardoner reminds us, is the root of all evil -- Radix malorum est cupiditas. Diametrically opposed to cupidity is charity, the well and fountain of all that is good. In paying court to passionate love that is moreover extra-marital, the lovers put their trust and hope in vainglorious and short-lived happiness that cannot give them the security and well-being they so zealously seek. The One Thing Needful, caritas, is what they lack by definition since their cupiditas is the furthest possible remove from God's unique love: there is no optative alternative to God's love that comes with a like guarantee of security and continuity ad infinitum.

In one recent study[11] an analysis has been made of the supernatural elements in the poem demonstrating the curious mixture of the divine and the profane, on both counts far above that of the Italian

poem. In the vast panoply of the Troilus names such as Jove, God, Lord and "pardieux" are used indiscriminately while patently Christian ideas are employed in overtly pagan contexts. The pun in the application of the word "Love" and the sacramental air surrounding the illicit love of Troilus and Criseyde have been discussed above. Among other elements may be descried the following: Troilus' "mea culpa, lord, I me repente!" (reported by Pandarus II, 525) as though at a Confession; his uncertainty about whether Criseyde was divinity or woman (I, 425-427) balanced by the Narrator's comment that "Paradis stood formed in her yen" (V, 817); and his ideas about "God's omniscience . . . His universal sway . . . and . . . His redemptive power." As Meech says further,

> The Christian tone which recurs with varying strength in mentions of the Supreme Being is present also in diverse metaphors . . . and in the following nonmetaphorical utterances: Troilus' ejaculatory "How devel maistow brynge me to blisse?" and Pandarus' "the devel have his bones!" "Fy on the devel!" and "the devel spede hym that it recche"; the narrator's . . . glossing of the Palladium as a "relik"; and Criseyde's observations:
>
> It sate me wel bet ay in a cave
> To bidde and rede on holy seyntes lyves,
>
> and
>
> Shal I nat love, in cas if that me leste?
> What, par dieux! I am naught religious.[12]

These representative and other numerous references defend the claim of a pervasive Christian consciousness in the poem.

The approach used here has been rather circumscribed. This is due to the absolutism that a Christian frame of reference imposes in its virtual disregard for attenuating circumstances. Actions are

either right or wrong. Thus, while some Church divines -- for example, St Augustine -- believe that motivation or intention is equally crucial, if we let ourselves be induced to make the wrong action and do not put up active resistance, we cannot be excused from guilt. Besides, a system which has the inborn evil of man as one of its cardinal principles cannot help declaring an accused guilty, if only to have the power to pardon him. Although the Scriptures enjoin right behaviour toward our fellow-men, we take responsibility for our own works. Therefore, the "daily beauty" which may attend our lives for a time, the pressures that we have from people and events, our striving for physical happiness and pleasure -- all these as a composite of personality pale into indignificance when our Good Deeds and our Seven Deadly Sins are matched against each other. Application of Christian criteria to our human condition all too often succeeds in de-personalizing the individual whether he is seen as unregenerate blackguard, potential convert or worthy saint. But there is really an open territory between the moral straight jackets of the saint and the sinner.

If the Troilus were concerned only with "doctryne and sentence" it would have been a very dull poem indeed, or a "myrie tale" (X, I, 46) only in the same sense as the Parson's homily. But as we have seen especially in the case of the character of the heroine, it is intimately concerned with human personality and behaviour. An analysis of the poem that looks only to its modus operandi in a Christian dispensation cannot help finding its indiscriminate admixture of piety and impiety disturbing; to say that the extended narration

of the mixed fortunes of the hero and heroine is intended merely or even primarily as an *exemplum* sounds like perfect kindergarten logic. It is like telling a beginners' Sunday School class a tale about the Sun as a ball of fire set by God high up in Heaven from which light and power and life itself have their origin; moving over quickly to an elaborate parallel with the little hearth fire that gives warmth and light and friendly cheer; and concluding, almost as an afterthought, "But good little children must never go near the fire even though it is so useful and so fascinating to watch: when you feel like playing with fire go out and look at the sun." It is no tribute to Chaucer to suggest that he had an identical purpose in the *Troilus*. How he saw human life in relation to eternity will be the business of the final chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Narrator and Perspective

> Tout se résume en ces trois mots qui ont hanté le rêve du moyen âge: la Gloire, l'Amour, Dieu.
> Myrrha Lot-Borodine.

Chaucerian scholarship is continually contending with the problem of genre in an attempt to place the poet's major works into this or that category once and for all. The Canterbury Tales which constitute the best known and best discussed single work of Chaucer's may seem to belong to a fixed mode in that they fall into the overall plan of a pilgrimage with a stipulated destination. A number of questions, however, continue to be asked, for example, whether the pilgrims reach Canterbury or whether they attain the "Jerusalem celestial" which the Parson looks forward to in his Prologue; which of the pilgrims the poet patronizes and which he condemns; and perhaps with still less agreement, how to settle doubts and dissensions about individual tales and the complex relations that develop among the pilgrims; and how their stories react with each other. Yet the unfinished nature of the work is a factor that quite often appeases the disagreement or the bafflement that the Tales present either collectively or individually.

Troilus and Criseyde cannot contend with The Canterbury Tales in terms of variety of character or diversity of story-matter. Its main personages are only three -- or four if we include Diomede --

and it purports to be, from the very beginning, a narration of the varying fortunes in love of the hero, Troilus. Moreover, its symmetrical five-book structure and its cyclic progression invest it with a sense of completeness and unity in the manner of a classical drama, while the unequivocal and assertive ending, in its abnegation of one particular fragile love and its recommendation of another and opposed love that is eternal and uplifting would seem to "point a moral and adorn a tale." It may therefore appear paradoxical that in spite of all this the Troilus remains a far more controversial work of Chaucer's than The Canterbury Tales as far as the poet's intention and meaning are concerned.

The social and literary milieu in which a poet lives and works has a profound influence on his outlook and output whether positively or negatively, according to his acceptance or rejection of basic ideas and beliefs. As for Chaucer, it may truly be said, that he was capable of identifying himself with his age and equally well of reaching beyond it in insight and appeal, and neither achievement is able to quite outclass the other.

In a medieval environment where religious wars were being fought as well as political wars, bravery and prowess were excelling virtues reputed to be found more often than not among those of high birth. Chivalry, as this concept came to be known, was therefore a quest that every noble youth with some mettle sought to attain because in the true medieval spirit the concept soon became a coded behaviour with injunctions and rules for orderly conduct and rewards for

valour and skill. Knighthood thus became a symbol of high excellence signifying fame and reknown wrought in the battlefield.

In what is a deliberate oversimplification, another cult, the cult of courtesy, grew up in the midst of chivalry and used the knightly traits not as ends in themselves but as a means to an end. This new discipline was undergone by noble squires who wished to obtain the favour of a lady and sought glory and distinction in battle as a means of obtaining it. The importance of prowess is as a result subsumed under personal demeanour and good bearing so that rules of personal conduct take precedence over the prerequisite of proven courage. Mutatis mutandis this new cult develops an apotheosis of the object stimulating the pursuit of valour and courtly love takes the scene: from love of glory there emerges a glorification of Love as a divinity and good-in-itself.[1]

Meanwhile, the Church, reacting against these disturbing, if not heretical, trends which tended to side-track true devotion to God and the infinite, was busy committing heretics to the stake and setting up its own orders within ranks, stressing more actively the wickedness and worthlessness of the world when compared to the beauty and glory of heaven and its king, often with no less sensuality than the secular writers paid homage to their mistresses.[2] Whether or not the cult of the Virgin preceded that of the cult of Woman is not certain,[3] as has been remarked; nevertheless, it is still quite significant that there were these two flourishing traditions about the same time in the Middle Ages and that there was almost violent con-

flict between them. These three distinctive categories, then, Glory, Love and the Church (as may be surmised from the outline here) did not exist in isolation; frequently rather, were they in conflict.

A recognition of this last point is vital to what we have under consideration here. At the same time, it must be admitted that these divisions do not exactly coincide with those that I have in mind. But these categories will have served our purpose if they have brought to light the fact that in the medieval world concepts and ideas that vie with each other very often lose a part of their identity or win over additional force when placed in the lists with each other. Consequently, when talking of pagan, secular, or Christian it is very difficult to talk in terms of absolutes; and this is precisely the problem with love as we try to view it against a medieval background.

Frequently, in medieval criticism, the confrontation of loves is seen simply as black versus white -- pagan, heretical courtly love locked in a life and death struggle with orthodox Christian love or caritas,[4] but the opposition is not as clearcut as all that, as we shall soon see. Moreover, in the tradition of amour courtois it is not easy to decide what belongs to fact and what to fiction, that is to say, how much the convention was a literary artefact and how much a socially integrated custom, a fact that has been attested to by the eminent critic, C. S. Lewis who writes

> Years ago when I wrote about medieval love-poetry and described its strange, half make-belief "religion of love", I was blind enough to

treat this as an almost purely literary phenomenon. I know better now. Eros by his nature invites it. Of all loves he is, at his height, most god-like; therefore most prone to demand our worship. Of himself he always tends to turn "being in love" into a sort of religion.[5]

In the light of the above and of Chaucer's handling of the Eros phenomenon in the poem, it will be expedient to distinguish courtly love and secular love, similarities and congruencies notwithstanding.

The three facets of love that we are considering are "courtly," secular and divine. In a discussion on medieval aesthetics neither courtly love nor divine love would seem to require any great elaboration by way of introduction for they are usually considered to be poles apart with no viaducts in between. This is true only in theory; in other words, it is true on doctrinal principles alone, through which there have been many recriminations on both sides. Thus the Church maintained that the "courtly" heretics were profaning sacred rites in extolling the three-fold vice of adultery in its violation of religious, natural and social principles.[6] More specifically, it was charged with undermining the holy sacrament of marriage which was designed to indulge man's inherent frailty as well as to provide a means of propagating the species.

On their part the "court-of-love" adherents retorted that it was the Church that was to blame in the matter. The extreme view asserted that marriage was altogether incompatible with love in that the participants in the former more often than not had little to do with the match. Invariably, they claimed (not without justification), marriage was a business venture between two families striving for

wealth, power or peace by means of the contract and it was not unusual for the male party to dishonour the bond and rid himself of his acquired wife if things did not turn out the way he wanted.[7] In its condonement of such a material and arbitrary union, the Church was accused of inverting the established order by changing "Amor" into "Roma." The courtly love poet thus proclaimed that marriage was insecure and indiscriminate, a breeding ground for faithlessness. On this head, the following words from a neo-classical French poet -- Molière -- may be taken as representative[8]:

> Il est bien difficile enfin d'estre fidele
> A de certains maris faits d'un certain modele
> Et qui donne a sa fille un homme qu'elle hait
> Est responsable au Ciel des faites qu'elle fait.

Because the poets of amour courtois were reacting against what they considered inadmissible in Church doctrine and practice, their position is often rigid and inflexible in appearance.

In actual fact, though, there were divergent views among the troubadours themselves. For while some of them accentuated the more spiritual nature of love in which the souls of the lovers were constantly striving towards ultimate union, there is little disguise in many others about the purely physical aim of the passion they exalted.[9] To complicate the issue further, it was the vogue among these poets to praise earthly love at one time and then repudiate it in the end; or, indeed, to begin a work by paying tribute to earthly joy and love and end by rejecting all in a palinode.[10] This procedure is adopted by Andrew the Chaplain who writes a treatise for his nephew, Walter, describing the art of love in detail; in the first and second books

of his treatise he treats of the origins and acquisition of love and of its promotion, and in the final book he condemns all. Chaucer, too, flatly repudiates earthly love in a palinode at the end of the Troilus and includes the work at the end of the later Canterbury Tales in a recantation of his "translacions and enditynges of worldly vanitees" (X, I, 1084-1086).

As if this were not enough, another genre of literature sprang up among these already conflicting philosophies, in reaction to perhaps all of them. The Church had propounded the theory based on St John, the Apostle of Love, that Deus caritas est: God is Love. Courtly Love had set up its own system and both included among their tenets the deification of a Lady. The new school, far from idealizing or idolizing an object, plunged down into realism and naturalism. The realism of the fabliaux is uninhibited, unabashed and often extravagant. It is not satire against a particular stratum of society but spoofs indiscriminately Church, state and society with blatant, if charming, disrespect. As Muscatine observes,[11]

> It is full of exaggeration, of caricature and grotesque imagination. . . . It takes, in the ordinary sense, a realistic view of things. It finds its easiest subject in low life, but with high or low it is impartially impolite -- and often vulgar and obscene. . . . Despite the specializations of both vision and expression that this attitude entails, the literature at its best gives the impression of dealing with life directly, with something of life's natural shape and vitality.

This new attitude is not as confusing as it may seem at first blush. Fabliaux fairly consistently revolve around conventional settings involving well-worn themes and they make little or no claim to greatness or recognition as a cult. Besides, the tendency we have

noted among the "court-of-love" poets to write in now a courtly, now a religious vein is reflected in fabliaux, especially among the middle class for whom realism became, in this way, the popular medium; and it found its way, often with ironic intent, into the more serious genres.

The existence of the fabliaux as a force to be reckoned with confirms for us the existence of a third aspect that has already been suggested, especially when one considers that Chaucer made frequent use of this art form, which sometimes jostles with other types of consciousness in a number of The Canterbury Tales. As a matter of fact, the Troilus has never been denied a measure of realism and naturalism, though this realism has rarely been given a standing on its own. Yet its most endearing realism is not the intensely earthy sort of the fabliau but rather the psychological one whose delicate texture endears us to the heroine as the character who approximates most to this element in her portraiture. Under this head it is natural to include those psychological moments and situations when we are left alone with a character or two and we observe as they flit from one perplexing alternative to another with palpable misgiving or busy dread. Whatever proof there is of realism "in the ordinary sense" comes out in the flippant cynicism of the intermediary (usually in moments of otherwise high seriousness) who is quite capable of waking up an answering brusqueness from the heroine. What all this amounts to is a certification of the poet's mastery of subject-matter and medium to the extent that he can blend natural with ideal,

religious with profane in successful harmony. But this is to anticipate. Let us as a preliminary to an assessment of Chaucer's success with the Troilus first glimpse at a few opinions that go against the grain of the viewpoint to which we are aiming.

To begin with, let us consider the supposition that Troilus and Criseyde is pre-eminently a courtly love poem. If this were the case it should be possible to subtract the Filostrato from it -- since the Troilus is told de plus longue haleine -- without leaving much that is of qualitative value, discounting, to simplify the issue, the Christian conclusion whose worth and relevance have always been in the balance among critics. However, as even single-minded proponents of a courtly love theme freely admit, Chaucer improved upon Boccaccio by deepening the courtly love element and pruning the story of some of the major components that impair a "courtly" outlook.[12] Nonetheless there is a sense in which the Italian poem is more closely geared to a "courtly" outlook and that is that it is concerned with little else. The English poem, on the contrary, has a fund of ideas and criteria that are not all in action at one and the same time except by association; and Criseyde's character has never quite yielded to analysis as a heroine of courtoisie -- indeed she has perplexed all readers.

Against the contention that the poem is a "sublimation of earthly to heavenly love and of pagan to Christian faith" with a "feeling in the Epilogue [that] is in no way foreshadowed at the beginning or elsewhere"[13] the exegetical school provides a ready rejoinder by pointing out all the evidence of a basic Christian pattern

present throughout the poem -- real, apparent and otherwise.[14] If more evidence than this is required, sanctuary can be sought by an appeal to the deterministic streak in the poem and the sense of tragedy that haunts the narrative from beginning to end. In spite of this, the claim of worldliness has a germ of truth in it that is not so lightly dismissed. This is a point to which we shall return.

In view of the fact that the arguments against the worldly view provide the basis for an outright Christian approach, one must needs look elsewhere for evidence so as to obviate a tu quoque situation. In all fairness to the view that proclaims a predominantly Christian cosmos, it must be pointed out that its spokesmen do not deny a this-worldly content or attitude, that is, from the characters' own scale of priorities. The absorption of the characters in mundane things (the eschatologists would aver) supports rather than weakens such a claim. But this kind of stance can be taken to extremes, a reinvocation of the late medieval penchant for "religious interpretation of individual things," "the craving for hallowing every action of daily life [which] verges in our eyes on the ridiculous."[15] Necessarily, too, a Christian outlook neglects those finer points of style and rhetoric, nuances of tone and emphasis, psychological and attitudinal interplay or conflict in reducing all to a common principle. There are not even shades of grey in the overall landscape, only contours of black and white, of good and evil, of conformity and nonconformity.

We have been edging closer and closer to an overt hypothesis.

Put simply, it is that a critique of the Troilus based wholly on one of the levels of love just outlined cannot do justice to the poem's diversity or complexity. Had the poet intended, as in the Legend of Good Women, "The naked text in English to declare" (G 86), such a procedure would have been both feasible and laudable. But a poet of Chaucer's stature writing in a period of such pervasive literary and aesthetic upheaval as has here been exposed may be expected to do no less than reflect the ideas of his time. That he could successfully mingle disparate and even contradictory notions of love and life in a single work is a mark of his genius and his art which calls for some attention.

One of the questions that have been raised in recent criticism of Chaucer's handling of the Troy story concerns the identity of the Narrator. It had been customary to equate him directly with the poet speaking in propria persona but majority opinion is shifting towards the identification of a story-teller independent of the poet and who, while more knowledgeable than the characters involved in his tale, is somewhat less discerning of the full implications of his account than his audience.[16] A product of such an evaluation is that it militates against the standard impression of a mocking Chaucer, revelling with tongue in cheek in all the busy escapades of his creations only to make a volte face at the last and scoff at the very object he had set forth so painstakingly. More importantly, it removes the poet to an eminence where he is free from the direct implications of the narrative -- a position of distance without distaste -- from which he can dedicate

his little tragedy to his immediate hearers and to posterity. It is not irrelevant to note as well that the distinction between Narrator-persona and poet-artist is by itself an index of the poem's complexity.[17]

The Narrator stimulates our interest in the narrative by his own zestful involvement with the story and with the characters; as a result he is often found commenting on the predicaments and fortunes of the main personnages, giving his judgment on their decisions and actions. Troilus is treated quite sympathetically -- Muscatine thinks his portraiture too "courtly"[18] -- his extremes of dread, misgiving and incompetence balancing those instances when his courage and courtesy are hugely applauded, even if the portraits smack of the conventional. His profile in Book Five vis-à-vis those of Criseyde and Diomede is very favourable:

> And Troilus wel woxen was in highte,
> And complet formed by proporcioun
> So wel that kynde it nought amenden myghte;
> Yong, fressh, strong, and hardy as lyoun;
> Trewe as stiel in ech condicioun;
> Oon of the beste entecched creature
> That is, or shal, whil that the world may dure. (V, 827-833)

It is in his depiction of the heroine, however, that the Narrator's empathy is most clearly revealed. John Bayley has said that for a poet to inspire his readers to a love for his creations he must himself "generate" such a love,[19] and it is in the characterization of Criseyde that the poet's sensitivity is most charmingly disclosed. Through the Narrator he makes us aware of those qualities that endear her to us, particularly in the ascending action of the plot. Her alluring ambiguity of character imbues her with traits that could

produce a saint or sinner depending on occasion and criteria. She finds bliss and happiness because she is wise enough to make concessions and yield her love to the hero. Ironically it is this same principle, applied in a different situation that hurries her to her downfall. The Narrator-commentator stresses her innocence in the face of Pandarus' wheedling, shows her weighing the odds for a commitment to the hero and finally letting herself run with the tide simulated by her uncle. Her inordinate sense of fear is quelled in the security she finds in Troilus' love but erupts afresh when she has to leave for the Greek host. Her feeling of alienation, dispelled when she knows she can rely on Troilus for love and succour, returns when she feels lost and lonely "With wommen few, among the Grekis stronge" (V, 688). Yet, even though she is "muwet, milde and mansuete" (V, 194) -- implying her stateliness, gentleness and dignity -- all is not complementary in her delineation. Otherwise we would not have heard of her proneness to stumble. This fact is exactly what accents her humanity. If we have been struck by her beauty and charms, we are liable, like Pandarus, to hate her when she no longer conforms to our expectations of her. But if we take her, as the Narrator does, for a beautiful, loving, sincere and honest being and a woman, we can with him "excuse hire yet for routhe" (V, 1099). This would not be an act of condonement -- her letter falsely accusing Troilus of betraying her is a rehash of her uncle's (and Troilus') tactics for seducing her. It would constitute, rather, an act of grace "For she so sory was for hire untrouthe" (V, 1098).

Above all his other functions, the Narrator's views and attitudes to love are of paramount importance. Book I is very illuminating on this subject. There, at the very beginning, he exhorts lovers to pray to Love for all those who suffer misfortunes similar to that of Troilus and also to pray to God for himself,

> That I have myghte to shewe, in som manere
> Swich peyne and wo-as Loves folk-endure,
> . . . . . .
> And biddeth ek for hem that ben at ese,
> That God hem graunte ay good perseveraunce,
> And sende hem myght hire ladies so to plese
> That it to Love be worship and plesaunce.
> For so Hope I my sowle best avaunce,
> To prey for hem that Loves servauntz be,
> And write hire wo, and lyve in charite. (I, 34-39)

It is impossible to divorce religious from secular in this exhortation. One has the impression that the woe and distress that unfortunate lovers have is penance enough to win a place in heaven, Deo volente. One thing, however, seems certain; that is, the double-entendre in the use of the word "Love" to mean "God" and then "Cupid, the god of Love." The curious blend is further complicated by the introduction of "charite" which is another name for God's Love.

The admonition to prayer is followed by an urging to love. Love here comes in the guise of the natural impulse which binds creatures together and because it is "vertuous in kynde" the Narrator advises us not to resist it (I, 253-259) but to give in to it,

> For evere it was, and evere it shal byfalle,
> That Love is he that alle thing may bynde,
> For may no man fordon the lawe of kynde. (I, 236-239)

It is worthy of note that the Narrator considers himself ineligible for love, he says, "for myn unliklynesse" (I, 16); he is only a servant

of the God of Love setting down misadventures in love (as a warning?) so as to save his own soul -- which explains why he wishes to escape the fire of love (I, 436). His preclusion from the direct heat of love is of value in that it places him in an unbiased position for cataloguing faithfully the joys and sorrows of those who have been in love. As a clerk to Love, therefore, his words are of some authority.

In the proem to Book II the Narrator insists on his artlessness while praying to Clio the Muse of History to inspire him in his task of translation from his fictitious Latin source. He declares:

> Me nedeth here noon other art to use.
> Forthi to every lovere I me excuse,
> That of no sentement I this endite,
> But out of Latyn in my tonge it write.
>
> Wherfore I nyl have neither thank ne blame
> Of al this werk, but prey yow mekely,
> Disblameth me, if any word be lame,
> For as myn auctour seyde, so sey I.
> Ek though I speeke of love unfelyngly,
> No wondre is, for it nothing of newe is;
> A blynd man kan nat juggen wel in hewis. (II, 11-21)

In spite of his proclaimed lack of feeling, however, the Narrator butts in time and again to give a running commentary on the development of the love he is recounting. Thus in his anxiety to prevent a misunderstanding about the rate of Criseyde's falling in love, he calls in evidence to show that the planet Venus was in a position of benignity in the seventh heaven (II, 673-686). Then he reverts to the conventional images of the burning coals of fire and the growth from small beginnings of the great oak tree in his description of the increase of Troilus' passionate desire.

To take a final example, the Invocation preceding the third

book resumes the theme of love as developed in the Invocation to Book I. The Narrator declares that

> God loveth, and to love wol nought werne;
> And in this world no lyves creature
> Withouten love is worth, or may endure. (III, 12-14)

Dante's Virgil puts the necessity of Love more forcefully than this. In Canto XVII of the Purgatorio he is made to address the Pilgrim in these words:

> Nè creator nè creatura mai,
> . . . . figliuol, fu sanza amore,
> o naturale o d' animo; e tu 'l sai. (91-93)[20]

This suggests not only the fact that God loves but also the idea that one cannot think of the First One or any creature of His without thinking of Love. In the meantime the Narrator, in his capacity as servant of Love, invokes the aid of the blissful goddess at this important stage of his work:

> Now, lady bryght, for thi benignite,
> At reverence of hem that serven the,
> Whos clerc I am, so techeth me devyse
> Som joye of that is felt in thi servyse.
> Ye in my naked herte sentement
> Inhielde, and do me shewe of thy swetnesse. (III, 39-44)

After this, and when the time comes, the self-styled ungainly but faithful story-teller who had wished to be exempt from love's fire can back down and say,

> O blisful nyght, of hem so long isought
> How blithe unto hem bothe two thow weere!
> Why nad I swich oon with my soule ybought,
> Ye, or the leeste joie that was theere?
> Awey, thow foule daunger and thow feere,
> And lat hem in this hevene blisse dwelle,
> That is so heigh that al ne kan I telle! (III, 1317-1323)

and again:

> This joie may nought writen be with inke;
> This passeth al that herte may bythynke. (III, 1693-1694)

The recognition of Chaucer's conscious design in interposing a Narrator or alter ego between himself and the world of the poem initiates, on a closer inspection, an additional intricacy: the Narrator in his turn relegates the responsibility for the story to his authorities -- officially Statius, Lollius, Boethius, Dares and Dictys -- and readily refers his audience to his sources, principally when he protests (in the middle of a digression) that he does not wish to digress. It is now a stereotyped observation to remark that when the Narrator most persuasively expostulates on the accuracy of his reproduction of material from the original, it is then that he is most certainly introducing new material of his own, with the result that his most immediate source of inspiration for writing the Troilus -- Boccaccio's Il Filostrato -- is never mentioned by him as one of his authorities.[21]

On account of this persistence in the shifting of responsibility, there ensues a situation within the poem in which a pinpointing of responsibility or culpability becomes a frustrating endeavour. This exasperation dovetails with the purposeful ambiguity in characterization and event to produce varying perspectives that keep altering with criteria and standpoint. Certain seemingly rigid attitudes become more flexible when seen from a different angle and very minor and innocuous features assume additional significance. More than anything else this moving focus demands a circumspect approach. It

means that in order to appreciate the world of the Troilus where the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked without violence together one must have a willingness and a flexibility capable of accommodating its changing perspectives. It is for this reason that in assessing the love symptom that dominates the poem it is necessary to be amenable to the changing concepts of love and the identity of different conceptions of love within the poem at given moments of the action.

In the preceding pages a disapproving eye has been cast on that type of explication of the poem that relies almost exclusively on one of the levels of love because such a procedure would warp the vision that the poem poses by reducing its imposing vistas to myopic squints. Provided, however, that expositions in this vein are deliberately designed to illustrate aspects of the rich panorama displayed in the Troilus (as in the exposés in the foregoing chapters), they need not be denied a worthy aim. What they do is that they raise a query about priority: admitting that these separate and sometimes conflicting and converging loves exist within the multiconsciousness of the poem, which one has ascendancy over the rest and for what reasons? A query of this sort unavoidably brings to the fore conflicting standards and criteria of judgment. It would seem at first sight that the real opposition exists between caritas and Eros with the undefined secular love hovering in between. But the problem has more to it than that. "Medieval Caritas," as Nygren has observed,

> is a complex phenomenon, containing elements both of Agape and Eros. The problem of Eros and Caritas is therefore quite different from the problem of Eros and Agape. In the case of the latter, Eros is confronted with the Christian idea of love in its original sense; in

> the former, with the Christian-idea remodelled under the influence, in part, of the Eros motif. . . . Caritas in the mediæval sense of the term virtually signifies a neutral point in the conflict between Eros and Agape; in Caritas the tension between Eros and Agape has become, at least for the moment, so slight as to be imperceptible.[22]

On the basis of form and appearance, the contradistinctions among these kinds of love are not nearly so well marked.

A recasting of a few presumptions about love in the Middle Ages is now appropriate. Owing to studies that approach the problem with a Christian bias, it is customary to discern the intrinsic heresy of Courtly Love and assert that this was a movement against received orthodoxy and therefore suspect. It is not often that the conflict is seen as the vieing of two philosophical doctrines which demand equal -- and equally unprejudiced -- attention. An explanation that points to a rationale, in terms of reactionary measures, does not assist in finding a solution for the opposition of the "courtly" system to that of the Catholic Church for it raises the whole question of the Church's own borrowing of pagan and secular myths for its own purposes, in short, its maintaining a body of received and expanding tradition sometimes in conflict with the direct teachings of Holy Scripture. The crux of the issue is that in form and appearance, at least, there is little to choose between the "court-of-love" cult and Roman Catholicism in the medieval era.

Let us return to the Troilus and the Epilogue which is the fundamental criterion for the Christian outlook of the poem. An extreme view has stated that "the Epilog is not a part of the whole and is detachable at will, and one need not of necessity consider it at

all in an interpretation of the drama."[23] This is no more and no less than a literal interpretation of the Narrator's words during the crucial first night the lovers had together:

> But soth is, though I kan nat tellen al,
> As kan myn auctour, of his excellence,
> Yet have I seyd, and God toforn, and shal
> In every thyng, al holy his sentence;
> And if that ich, at Loves reverence,
> Have any word in eched for the beste,
> Doth therwithal right as youreselven leste.
>
> For myne wordes, heere and every part,
> I speke hem alle under correccioun
> Of yow that felyng han in loves art,
> And putte it al in youre discrecioun
> To encresse or maken dymynucioun
> Of my langage, and that I yow biseche. (III, 1324-1336)

In view, however, of the Narrator's ironic reference to his sources, a literal application of this principle will have to be used with great discretion. The point must also be borne in mind that the poet who wrote the palinode at the end of the Troilus was the very poet who in this same poem made the doctrinaire Pandarus to remark that "th'ende is every tales strengthe" (II, 260). Chaucer could hardly have added the Epilogue if it was not fundamental to his vision of the poem's artistic unity.

It seems, indeed, that an attempt to "maken dymynucioun" of the poem not for oneself alone but as a governing principle for everyone serves only to thwart the poet when, as craftsman, he adjures God in the Epilogue thus:

> And for ther is so gret diversite
> In Englissh and in writyng of oure tonge,
> So prey I God that non myswrite the,
> Ne the mysmetre for defaute of tonge.
> And red wherso thow be, or elles songe,
> That thow be understonde, God I biseche! (V, 1793-1798)

One cannot help adding that a reluctance to include the Epilogue as a part of the poem is generally suggestive of a view that sees the Christian and "courtly" elements in bitter opposition instead of, as has been shown, virtually indistinguishable in practice. But let us review the Epilogue itself, momentarily, in respect of the recommendation that Chaucer is making.

The poet is of course addressing the young people; love, he says, is developing in them as they grow up. The essence of the caveat is that God will not play false to anyone who places his heart completely at His disposal. No half measures will do. It is either God or "feynede loves." As a message this is plain and simple enough. But the operative word in the whole passage is "repeyreth." It carries the sense of "returning," "going home" to God, implying that the legatees of this warning have been away. This means that the poet recognizes, even while recommending a recantation of earthly love, that this love is unavoidable. Why? Chaucer evidently thinks the two loves -- divine and earthly -- mutually exclusive for he establishes this point in the stanza following, as mentioned above. The clue to this apparent self-contradiction lies in the poet's conception of time. It is also this idea of time that most successfully distinguishes divine love from all earthly love, whether naturalistic, pagan, secular, or courtly.

The joy and sorrow that the troubadour poet experienced almost simultaneously, derived from the beauty and, alas, the transience of all terrestrial things. Living in a world where the wages of sin

were constantly being impressed upon him because of the constant invasion of the religious into secular life, he was never allowed to forget that the price of earthly joy was too high to pay. Since he believed that perfection was a gradual and continuing process, he conceived that he could fulfil the law by obtaining the minimum requirements. Eternity for him was a desert vast that lay all open before him so that a rest by the oasis of life must have been both appealing and compelling to him.

Chaucer, as one of the direct inheritors of the troubadours, must have believed no less in this. He saw the temporal scene as viable and lovely, even if he saw in it what provided him with copious material for unveiling the paradox of the human condition. His sense of humour accentuates the fact that he "saw life steadily and saw it whole" and that he took it seriously: he is neither cynical nor smug. Most of all he believed in love in life and his many creations depict life and love as a continuing and renewing process, ordered and vital. "It is on earth that we must love."[24] Yet he, too, could not forget the "Deserts of vast eternity" that lay beyond time. This is the pivotal factor in his vision, as of many of his contemporaries for the here and now is a preparation for the there and then, the Great Beyond. Earthly life and love taken as a whole is of itself a preparation for the life hereafter. We can only come to a knowledge and love of God when we show love for His creation. Such love is a kind of purgation similar to the one Coleridge's Ancient Mariner undergoes when he blesses the slimy creatures unawares. But as the

mildly doctrinaire Criseyde reminds us, "In every thyng, I woot, there lith mesure" (II, 715). Thus, because our earthly life offers us only a measure of perfection remote from the ideal perfection of the world to come, we must not allot to it a devotion out of proportion with its worth. We must love the things of earth with a love that has implications within the confines of time.

It is partly for this reason -- the necessity for an enjoyment of life that did not jeopardize their stakes in a life beyond time -- that Chaucer's milieu preached fervently the Horatian doctrines of carpe diem (seize today, catch and enjoy the pleasures of the moment) and carpe florem (pluck the flower, capture beauty). Their main concern, however, was to exploit to the full the fleeting pleasures of earth while they were still within reach. This made their sense of the shortness of life very acute. The more specific theme of carpe florem is what Pandarus exploits in his overtures to Criseyde on Troilus' account. When Criseyde asks him what his advice would be concerning Troilus' proposal he counsels her to love and expatiates, making the following peroration:

> "Thenk ek how elde wasteth every houre
> In ech of yow a partie of beautee;
> And therfore, er that age the devoure,
> Go love; for old, ther wol no wight of the.
> Lat this proverbe a loore unto yow be:
> 'To late ywar, quod beaute, whan it paste';
> And elde daunteth daunger at the laste.
>
> "The kynges fool is wont to crien loude,
> Whan that hym thinketh a womman berth hire hye,
> 'So longe mote ye lyve, and alle proude,
> Til crowes feet be growen under youre ye,
> And sende yow than a myrour in to prye,
> In which that ye may se youre face a morwe!'" (II, 393-405)

Criseyde does not utilize this principle of making the most of an ephemeral beauty and its concomitant pleasures when she muses over the proposition. She was preoccupied with liberty and safety, as we have seen. Troilus is too willing to serve his lady and too devoted in her service to think about anything else. Throughout the span of their successful love bond and even after their separation, the lovers display no anxiety about the transience of life or of youth. They are worried only about the limited time they have together or about the length of time between one meeting and another.

This courting of short-lived beauty and pleasure, it must be noted, did not enjoy unchallenged rein throughout the late Middle Ages. Like every other fashion, it provoked a ready response from within the Church and from outside of it. The theme of memento mori (remember death) was sung with fervid gusto, and with this distinction. While the themes of carpe diem and carpe florem were forward looking and thus aimed at thwarting death, the reminder of the potency of death looked back at lost splendour and beauty and invoked a spectacle of the death-dance, death dragging along all sorts and conditions of men. Huizinga, who documents this development, comments on the contempt of the world that the exponents of this gruesome philosophy encouraged. "In exhibiting the horrors awaiting all human beauty, [he writes] already lurking below the surface of corporeal charms, these preachers of contempt for the world express, indeed, a very materialistic sentiment, namely, that all beauty and all happiness are worthless because they are bound to end soon."[25]

In all this debate the Church, which did about as much to encourage the contemptus mundi spirit as it did to discourage and stamp out the sensual pursuit of earthly pleasure, maintained a constant and unshakeable position. It is not for nothing that the age has been called an Age of Faith. The Church preached, and the people believed (or, at any rate, accepted), the simple truths of the Bible as relayed through allegory and vivid symbol. The innate sinfulness of man, his need for salvation, the love of God in sending His Son to save mankind, Christ's divine nature and the sanctity of His Virgin Mother, Mary, the necessity of passing through the Saviour and through Him alone to attain God's eternal kingdom, the treachery of earthly goods in attracting the individual towards their passing joys at the expense of the lasting joys of Heaven, the wisdom of renouncing the world, the flesh and the devil and of placing all our hopes on Heaven -- these and other ideas were distilled and fed into the impressionable mind of the medieval Christian. The defence of practices that were not expressly commanded by Holy Writ is indicative of a sensitive Church order anxious to protect itself against militant heresy and explains why harsh treatment was meted out to heretic and infidel in those times.

I have tried, throughout my discussion, to establish and maintain that ideas and beliefs in the medieval world were not as well-defined or as distinct as we are liable to see them from the vantage heights of our modern perspective. Concepts and opinions did not enjoy a lasting popularity but were in constant evolution. How much

acceptance a particular notion received from its milieu is to some extent a question of speculation, inasmuch as what people write (or even say) about their beliefs may be a far cry from their real sentiments, a conscious -- or perhaps even unconscious -- preservation of a myth. No age is lacking in myths, for myths are the stuff that gives society its sense of stability, of order, of continuity. To remove the myth is to tear the veil, to flay the flesh of society and alter it for the worse, to reveal it in a state of undress. Myths are either good or bad extrinsically, according as they are used for good or bad ends. The myth that the Middle Ages were an era untrammelled by unbelief or scepticism is a defiance of reason and fact; there have been pagans and atheists in all ages. The myth of contempt of the world, inspired by medieval poets and clerks, seems to hint at a secret longing for the pleasures of a world that they renounced more violently the more irresistibly they felt themselves being drawn towards a satiation of the desires that such pleasures invoked.

The degree of irony inherent in the interplay of the loves in the Troilus varies in inverse proportion to the extent to which the principles behind such loves modulate between the actual and the ideal. Even in the case of social behaviour where custom and propriety operate we talk quite often about paying lip-service to convention. But the difficulty of assessing the full range and depth of the poet's irony should not prevent us from trying. I have in some instances pointed out the irony of situation in which the lovers are

focussed in relation to the audience, for example, the exchange of Criseyde "for the townes goode" (IV, 553) which is the way Troilus sees things. Occurrences of verbal irony and verbal parallel abound in the poem. One need name only a few of these. We have seen, among others, the way love is echoed as a game pursued in varying degrees of ernest and jest by each of the principals,[26] and the prepossessions of the heroine with "sikernesse" and "juparte," "liberte" and "thraldom." We may also note the following: Hector's pity of Criseyde's plight in Book I reflected in his opposition of the decision to exchange her for Antenor in Book IV; Criseyde's own pity which leads her to accept Troilus' love, vitiated by her self-love which makes her betray him; the dressing of love in the garb of war and the overall parallel of Troilus' fortunes in love and Troy's fortunes in war, and the recurrent and contrasting use of direct verbal irony, notably in Pandarus' statements.

Over and above these, there is cosmic irony, attained in the distancing of the Narrator and the poet from responsibility, as we have observed. This distance is shared by the audience and, at the end, by Troilus.

One is apt, at first, to regard the poet's treatment of love as anatomical.[27] This study had a confessedly identical aim. But it is perhaps more accurate to view the poem as fulfilling several loves, functioning in an intricate pattern. None of these kinds seems to me satisfactory on its own. Courtly love has its pitfalls and shortcomings as well as its joys and happiness. Moreover, in ordinary human love we seem always to be at the mercy of circumstances

that are not all within our control, whether in connection with the object for whom we experience a constant longing and desire or in the attempt to preserve that love when once it is returned; indeed, difficulty in requiting love and in preserving that love when it becomes mutual seems to be a condition for a continued love. Finally, if we are to love God with true devotion we must be able to know and feel what love is, and earthly love is a necessary preliminary to love of God. Christians faithfully proclaim that God Himself demonstrated a model love of man when He sent His Son to earth to die for man's redemption. Thus, "His love is a pattern for our love."

Chaucer uses the principle of the universal bond of love to give coherence to the many loves of the Troilus. In the speech from the Purgatorio quoted above, Virgil goes on to say that natural love is incapable of erring and that it is our spiritual loves that are prone to error if injudiciously applied. Since the loves we have examined have their basis in man's dual nature in which the spiritual is of paramount importance, one may make the bold suggestion that love of goods or person or God can be erroneous, if not in its application, at least in the motivations from which love arises. In this regard, questions such as the following may be asked. Do we love material things or people because of their beauty, or utility, or from our lust? Do we love God because we have suffered from misery or want or disillusionment, or because we regard Him as our Maker and the hope of our salvation? These questions did not trouble the poet who wrote the Troilus for his concern with the quality of divine love

lay in its duration, its permanence. His story of the love of Troilus and Criseyde is set within time and as long as it is seen from their perspective as direct participants it is lovely and worthy. But under the eye of the eternal they are puny mortals pursuing a worthless object. This is why Troilus can laugh at those who mourn him from his elevation in the eighth sphere and why the Christian view takes control in the end.

The whole of life was seen as a quest by medieval men. Life was for them a pilgrimage through which they had to pass in a slow process towards ultimate perfection. Yet, even in their day, the popular pilgrimage to a holy shrine could be made as a search for grace or could be used as a cover for, or as an escape into, any number of misdeeds. Chaucer saw and detested this, with the result that his most damning criticism of his pilgrims is reserved for the erring clergy. In spite of this, he sincerely believed in the ultimate truth of the Gospel and, to this extent, his declamation in the Epilogue is an attestation of faith. He was aware of the absurdity of earthly endeavours when set against a divine background. In this perception, he was, however, not alone. The paradox of human life was an ever-present phenomenon in medieval ethics and was recognized even in man's fall, the <u>felix culpa</u> which embraced man's sin and projected God's mercy. This question of mercy is one that receives ample airing in the <u>Troilus</u> and the sentiment is the basis of perhaps the most delicate and, at the same time, the most savage line in Chaucer -- "pitee renneth soone in gentil herte" (I, A, 1761, IV, E, 1986). The har-

rowing -- and at the same time heavenly -- paradox of the tragi-comedy of the human condition is brilliantly realized in this charming lyric by the anonymous fifteenth-century poet[28]:

Adam lay ibounden,
Bounden in a bond:
Foure thousand winter
Thought he not too long.
And all was for an apple,
An apple that he tok,
As clerkes finden
Wreten in here book.

Ne hadde the apple take ben,
The apple taken ben,
Ne hadde never our Lady
A ben Hevene Quen.
Blissed be the time
That apple take was!
Therfore we moun singen,
'Deo gracias!'

Chaucer would have said "Amen" to that.

FOOTNOTES

Introduction

[1]The Art of Courtly Love, trans. J. J. Parry, 28.

Chapter I

[1]"What Chaucer Really Did," Essays and Studies, XVII (1932) 56.

[2]Chaucer's Troilus, Ch. I, 3-13.

[3]See below, 26.

[4]Valency, In Praise of Love, 3.

[5]There are two formulations of the Commandments in Andreas' treatise. The first and shorter one occurs in the fifth dialogue under Ch. 6 in Bk. I. The second and longer appears in Ch. 8 of Bk. II.

[6]I do not mean by this that love between the sexes was either unknown or unsung. Ovid, e.g., wrote many poems on heterosexual love. But their attitude to women was often cynical or condescending, not exalting and extolling like that of the troubadours.

[7]See Rougemont, Love in the Western World, 153 ff.

[8]All citations are from The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. F. N. Robinson. Hereafter cited as Robinson.

[9]In Ch. 6 of Bk. I Andreas gives the five methods of acquiring love: "The teaching of some people is said to be that there are five means by which it may be acquired: a beautiful figure, excellence of character, extreme readiness of speech, great wealth, and the readiness with which one grants that which is sought." He however avers "that love may be acquired only by the first three, and we think that the last two ought to be banished completely from Love's court."

[10]On Andreas' view of the importance of the go-between see Kirby, Chaucer's Troilus, 117-18.

[11]The notion of "pity" is a fundamental one in court poetry, and one that features largely in the Troilus. The troubadours construed it as indivisible from virtue -- a fact that Pandarus never loses sight of.

[12]Robinson, 822.

[13]Cp. Jordan, Shape of Creation, 71.

[14]Andreas himself settles the argument by declaring in Bk. II (Parry, 164) that "pure" and "mixed" are essentially the same.

[15]Bayley, The Characters of Love, 115, remarks on the "great weakness" of an affair under the code. See also Howard, The Three Temptations, 156.

Chapter II

[1]See "The Two Moralities of Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde," Transactions of the Roy. Soc. of Canada, XLIV, Ser. III, sec. 2 (June, 1950), 35-46.

[2]See Lewis, Allegory, 189.

[3]Here I follow Lewis (Allegory, 183) against e.g. Howard (The Three Temptations) in the belief that the action is set only nominally in Troy.

[4]Note, again, the similarity of their utterances:- Pandarus says "Women ben wise in short avysement" (IV, 936), while Criseyde declares "I am a womman, as ful wel ye woot, / And as I am avysed sodeynly..." (IV, 1261-62).

[5]See II, 631-48, ff. Criseyde's first impressions of Troilus as a suitor are those of a brave but modest knight-at-arms, the ideal courtly lover.

[6]See Lewis, The Four Loves, 93-96.

[7]On this, see Huizinga, The Middle Ages, 111 ff.

[8]By the time Troilus comes to use this technique, first during their last night together (IV, 1440-49) and just before they part finally -- "Now holde youre day, and do me nat to deye" (V, 84) -- it had probably run its full course and was no longer efficacious.

[9]She makes a number of protests in this regard. See, e.g., III, 170-75 and IV, 1667-73.

[10]"Obeissaunce" may simply mean "attention" but if it does mean "submission" or "obedience" here, the effect is one of mutual subjection.

[11]Muscatine, French Tradition, 164.

[12] Most notable, perhaps, is Professor Tatlock's remark that "to be given two Criseyde's (as we pretty much are) is unusual." For a summary of views for and against see Meech, Design, 118-21.

[13] Kirby, Chaucer's "Troilus", suggests this (232) and then renounces it (234-35), preferring a plea to her complexity.

[14] Lewis, Allegory, 185.

[15] She herself makes a comment that is apropos in IV, 766-70.

[16] Lewis, Allegory, 189. Bayley, The Characters of Love, calls the letter "a masterpiece of querulous evasion." The letter occurs in V, 1590-1631, esp. 1604 ff.

[17] "Selfishness" in this sense is not necessarily evil. Other types of love --- including Agape -- are also selfish. Here, it carries the meaning "exclusive."

[18] Cp. e.g. Sonnets 116 and 129.

[19] Antony and Cleopatra was "improved" by Dryden who gave it the new title All for Love.

Chapter III

[1] The material on the supernatural forces at work in the Troilus is drawn mainly from W. C. Curry, "Destiny in Troilus and Criseyde," from his Chaucer and the Medieval Sciences and D. W. Robertson, "Chaucerian Tragedy," EIH, XIX (1952).

[2] See esp. Robertson, "Chaucerian Tragedy," 2.

[3] It is the same type of pantheism in spirit as was later preached by Wordsworth when he talks, e.g., in Tintern Abbey of "a motion and a spirit that impels / All thinking things, all objects of all thought, / And rolls thorugh all things."

[4] Cp. Robertson, "Chaucerian Tragedy," 4-5.

[5] On the ordering of the Seven Deadly Sins see Makarewicz, The Patristic Influence on Chaucer, Ch. II on "Virtues and Vices," but esp. 152 and notes 10 and 11.

[6] Robinson, 824, note on l. 526.

[7] Cp. the Parson's analysis, X I 386 ff.

[8] These and other ideas have been expounded and developed by the Church Fathers from St Augustine downwards. For a summary of views, see Slaughter, Virtue according to Love, 9-13.

[9] As an instance of this Milton's God declares in Book III of Paradise Lost that He made man

> just and right
> Sufficient to have stood though free to fall
> . . . . . .
> . . . They therefore, as to right belong'd,
> So were created, nor can justly accuse
> Their Maker, or their making, or their fate,
> As if predestination overruled
> Their will disposed by absolute decree
> Or high knowledge. (III, 98-116)

[10] "Troilus on Determinism," Speculum, VI (1929) 226.

[11] Meech, Design.

[12] Design, 219.

Chapter IV

[1] Summarised from Valency, In Praise of Love, esp. 15-18, 26-28, 49-51.

[2] See Rougemont, Love in the Western World, 151-52, 158-59.

[3] But see Rougemont, 111.

[4] A. J. Denomy in "The Two Moralities of Chaucer's Troilus" describes the code as "unchristian and heretical" but catalogues it and Christianity as conflicting moralities.

[5] The Four Loves, 102.

[6] Rougemont, Love in the Western World, 275.

[7] Valency, among others, discusses this point. In Praise of Love, 63-64.

[8] Quoted from Valency, In Praise of Love, 67.

[9] Lazar, Amour courtois et fin' amors, 122-134.

8 These and other like [illegible] have been expounded and developed [illegible] the Church Fathers from St Augustine downwards. For a summary of views, see Haughey, _Virtue According to Love_, 9-13.

9 As an instance of Milton's God declares in Book III of _Paradise Lost_ that He made man

> Just and right
> Sufficient to have stood though free to fall
> . . . . . .
> . . . They therefore, as to right belong'd,
> So were created, nor can justly accuse
> Their Maker, or their making, or their fate,
> As if predestination overruled
> Their will, disposed by absolute decree
> Or high foreknowledge. (III, 99-119)

10 "Treatise on Determination," _Boethius_, 71 (1969) 224.

11 Woods, _Destiny_.

12 _Ibid._, 212.

[10]See Slaughter, Virtue according to Love, 156-78.

[11]Muscatine, French Tradition, 59.

[12]See Lewis, "What Chaucer Really Did," 56-75. For a brief summary, see Payne, The Key of Remembrance, 178-79 and ff.

[13]Tatlock, "The Epilog of Chaucer's Troilus," MP, XVIII (1921), 636. See also Meech, Design, 138.

[14]Cp., e.g, Jordan, Shape of Creation, who parallels the structure of the poem with the ordering of a Gothic cathedral.

[15]Huizinga, The Middle Ages, 136-37, 138 and ff.

[16]See Donaldson, "The Ending of Chaucer's Troilus," in Early English and Norse Studies, 28 and 44. For a summary of opposed views, see Bronson, In Search of Chaucer, Ch. I and Jordan, Shape of Creation, 67-70, 104.

[17]Cp. Jordan, Shape of Creation, 67-68.

[18]French Tradition, 137.

[19]The Characters of Love, 39. See also 7.

[20]"Neither Creator nor creature, my son, was ever without love, either natural or of the mind. . . and this thou knowest." The Divine Comedy (Il Purgatorio), trans. J. D. Sinclair, 224 and 225.

[21]See Karl Young, Origin and Development, 181 and 194-95.

[22]Agape and Eros, 55-56. Cp. D'Arcy, Mind and Heart, Ch. 1.

[23]Curry, Chaucer and the Medieval Sciences, 298.

[24]Rougemont, Love in the Western World, 311.

[25]The Middle Ages, 126.

[26]Howard also discusses this element of "game." See his Three Temptations, 93-109.

[27]Cp. Jordan, Shape of Creation, 81.

[28]Quoted from Davies, ed., Medieval English Lyrics, 160-61.

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